

**MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 18th January 2017 at
9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.**

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
	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

APOLOGIES:	Cllr E Heron	National Park Appointed Verderer
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IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss Sue Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr Jonathan Gerrelli	Head Agister

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2017/9051	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	RESUME
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The Minutes of Court held on 14th December were approved subject to one amendment. The Official Verderer was authorised to sign the minutes once the amendment has been made.

Action
OV/Clerk

2017/9052	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	RESUME
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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 new Basic Payment Scheme. Mr Pasmore declared an interest in the new 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 Dowsett is a Forestry Commission Volunteer Ranger.

Mr Deakin and Mr Readhead are members of the New Forest Stallion Syndicate.

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.

Mr Deakin and Mr Readhead are Directors of the New Forest Livestock Society.

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.

- 2017/9053 **CONDITION OF STOCK – REPORT BY THE HEAD AGISTER** **RESUME**
- The Head Agister reported that some animals are definitely losing condition. We have been lucky with the weather and stock has been very good up until now.
- The Agisters are extremely busy marking cattle and assisting commoners with TB testing. The Head Agister commented that the Agisters would find it difficult to find time to catch poor animals and mark cattle at the same time. The bulk of cattle marking should finish at the end of January.
- Animals which are losing condition are being removed as necessary. The situation is not serious but as usual mares with foals are the first to start to go back in condition.
- 2017/9054 **REPORT ON ANIMALS REMOVED FROM THE FOREST** **RESUME**
- This very useful report had been circulated prior to the Court.
- 2017/9055 **STOCK DEATHS - OTHER THAN ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS** **RESUME**
- This very useful report had been circulated prior to the Court.
- 2017/9056 **REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR** **RESUME**
- | | <u>2016</u> | <u>2015</u> |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Forest Ponies | 4750 | 4674 |
| Forest Cattle | 4247 | 3421 |
| Forest Donkeys | 110 | 107 |
| Forest Pigs | 256 | 372 |
| Forest Sheep | 0 | 0 |
| Total Forest Stock | 9363 | 8574 |
| Common Ponies | 760 | 715 |
| Common Cattle | 1304 | 1144 |
| Common Donkeys | 112 | 93 |
| Common Pigs | 120 | 63 |
| Common Sheep | 293 | 232 |
| Total Common Stock | 2589 | 2247 |
| Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest | 9107 | 8202 |
| Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons | 2176 | 1952 |
| Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys | 11283 | 10154 |
| Total Stock – Forest & Commons | 11952 | 10821 |
- 2017/9057 **BYELAW ENFORCEMENT** **DISCHARGE**
- No new byelaw offences have been reported
- 2017/9058 **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS** **RESUME**
- The Announcements and Decisions were approved.
- The Head Agister left the meeting.**

OPEN COURT – 10.00 a.m.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Bruce Rothnie, Deputy Surveyor
Mr Paul Grugeon, Land Agent (New Forest)

ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

2017/9059 VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME

Those of you in the Verderers Grazing Scheme will be pleased to know that the 2016 payments have now been made. Just before Christmas we paid the forest commoners. On Monday this week we made the commons payments, after receiving the National Trust's contribution last week.

2017/9060 LATCHMORE CATCHMENT RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT

In our November Court, I informed you that we had not been successful in gaining planning permission for our river restoration at Latchmore. At our recent HLS board meeting, we decided that we will not pursue the Latchmore project further, withdrawing from the planning process, allocating our money and staff time to less controversial projects over our 50,000 acres, the largest HLS scheme in the UK. This is a pragmatic decision which gives us the opportunity to press on with other very good HLS projects, without committing staff to a further round of the planning process and stakeholder discussions at this time.

The purpose of our HLS funding is to maintain and enhance the forest, and we will therefore now be able to increase our financial support for an even wider range of work that will improve our priceless environment and fragile ecology.

We still firmly believe that the Latchmore restoration would have greatly benefited the condition of the Forest, and we will therefore continue to monitor the erosion of the mires and deterioration of the ecology of the catchment; it would be irresponsible of us not to do so. I am much in favour of river restorations in general, and the Latchmore project in particular, and I am disappointed that it will not go ahead. However, as I have said previously, there is more to unite both sides of the argument, than to divide us: we all clearly love the New Forest, cherishing its landscape and beauty. This common ground should bind us together in the future, and I advocate that we all work together from now on to protect and improve the New Forest for future generations.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2017/9061 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2016

The Agisters attended 29 accidents in December. This compares with 11 in November last year.

3 ponies and 2 donkeys were killed, 5 ponies were injured and had to be destroyed, 8 ponies and 1 cow were injured, 2 animals were uninjured and in 8 instances nothing was found. 5 of the ponies killed were wearing reflective collars.

22 accidents occurred in the dark, 4 at twilight and 3 in daylight.

All of the accidents were reported.

14 of the motorists involved were local.

2017/9062 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR 2016

Up to the end of October, the accident rate was on a par with the previous year but then we had two months when there was a fairly significant increase, December being the worst, when there was more than double the number of accidents than in December the previous year. Rather than bore everyone now by reading out too many figures, I will include December's stats in the Minutes for reference and concentrate now on 2016 as a whole.

In 2016 the Agisters attended 146 accidents involving Forest stock. In 2015 the figure was 127 which means we had an increase last year of 19 accidents.

42 ponies, 13 cattle and 8 donkeys died. 21 ponies 8 cattle, 5 donkeys and 1 pig were injured. 4 ponies, 1 cow and 2 donkeys were uninjured and 25 ponies, 12 cattle and 6 donkeys were reportedly involved in accidents but nothing was found.

102 accidents occurred in the dark, 21 at twilight and 23 in daylight.

17 accidents were not reported, which is one less than in 2015.

65 drivers were known to be local. 64 drivers reported having had a collision with an animal but no driver details were recorded.

Although any increase is disappointing, the number of accidents involving Forest stock in 2016, shown as a percentage of animals turned out, is not hugely different to 2015 and is the second lowest on record. Last year the percentage was 0.53. In 2015 it was 0.51.

2017/9063 THE SPEED CAMERA VAN

Unfortunately, as yet we don't have the speed camera van data for 2016. I will endeavour to bring you that information in February.

PRESENTMENTS

2017/9064 BRAMSHAW GOLF CLUB
Presentment by Mrs Mary Gray

Mrs Gray said that whilst she supports cutting and burning of excessive scrub, she is concerned that some recent clearance at the 18th tee may result in golfers hitting balls further towards the left, in the direction of the adjacent cricket club field where younger cricketers play. Mrs Gray said she is concerned for the safety of the children.

2017/9065 NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION 150TH ANNIVERSARY
Presentment by Mr John Ward, Chairman, New Forest Association

'Thank you for permitting me to make this presentment today on behalf of the New Forest Association, or to use our new brand image 'Friends of the New Forest'

I am not here today to talk about some current local misdemeanour or issue within the Forest, but to talk about our Association itself.

2017 marks the 150th Anniversary of the New Forest Association.

This makes us ten years older than this Court as it was reconstituted in the 1877 New Forest Actand I think we may justifiably claim that the NFA played no small part in the lobbying and campaigning that led to that Act reaching the statute book. Indeed Briscoe Eyre and Clement Esdaile who were elected as Verderers in 1877 had both been key founding fathers of the New Forest Association.

So, it is appropriate that this first Verderers Court meeting of 2017 should be the venue where we mark the start of our 150th anniversary year programme of celebrations.

The minutes of the inaugural meeting at which the Association was formed record the resolution: "That this meeting approves of an Association being formed for the preservation of the open lands of the New Forest, and for the general protection of the Commoners rights over the New Forest"

With these terms of reference it is hardly surprising that we have been a regular attender at Court meetings, and if my arithmetic is correct we have made presentments in front of 16 Official Verderers – must be a record of some sort.

Also during the past 150 years we have sparred with and at times been in downright opposition to 15 Deputy Surveyors from Lawrence Cumberbatch onwards.

Notwithstanding our clear purpose to work for the long-term protection of the New Forest we have not always been of one mind on the means to this end.

Most recently the proposal to create a New Forest National Park and Authority managed to split our members evenly into two camps. Both those who opposed and those who supported a National Park being set up, sincerely believed that their view was in the best interests of the Forest.

We survived and once the decision was taken lost no time in grasping a new role as 'Critical Friend' to the National Park Authority, and we became the independent organisation representing the interests of the New Forest nationally as a Council member of the Campaign for National Parks.

So, after 150 years are the Forest's problems behind us so that we may gracefully retire? I'm sure no one in this hall would believe this. Indeed threats to the Forest may change with the years but they seem to spring up as frequently and vigorously as Scots Pine seedlings on heathland.

A container port on Dibden Bay, Climate change and realignment of the coast, 1,000 houses on Fawley Power Station site, Recreation over-use on the open forest are just a few of today's threats.

We are starting the serious business of our anniversary year next Tuesday (24th January) with a talk and meeting in Lyndhurst to focus attention on issues affecting the future of the New Forest. There has been considerable interest in attending from Forest organisations and individuals with all 200 places now booked; and I am pleased to say that Dominic May, your Official Verderer, will be there to put a perspective from the Verderers Court.

We intend to remain the independent campaigning voice for the New Forest through this year and beyond and I look forward to continuing to work with all of you who share our vision for the long-term protection and enhancement of the Forest together with its commoning traditions.'

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2017/9066 BRAMSHAW GOLF CLUB

RESUME

Mr Readhead said that the clearance works were designed to ensure that the risk of golf balls being driven too close to the cricket pitch is avoided. Mr Grugeon and Mr Readhead will visit the golf course.

Action
DR/PG

2017/9067 NEW FOREST ASSOCIATIONS 150TH ANNIVERSARY

DISCHARGE

The Court was pleased to hear the NFA's presentment.

SUBMISSIONS BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2017/9068 SSE SUPPLY TO NEW DSLAM BROADBAND CABINET AT PITMORE DISCHARGE
LANE, SWAY

The proposed new cabling to the DSLAM cabinet which is to be sited outside the perambulation close to the cattle grid at Pitmore Lane was approved subject to the three usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions and compensation for loss of grazing. A condition of the consent is that BT removes the old redundant cabinet which is on the Forest close to the pole.

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

2017/9069 ACCESS LICENCES

RESUME

A detailed discussion took place concerning when the Verderers should be consulted and when their consent is required.

It was agreed that the Verderers will be consulted when new access licences are issued or a licence is renewed and a new 60 year licence is issued. These circumstances often take place on change of ownership of a property. In some cases, licences may simply be transferred to a new owner, leaving the remaining period of the licence to run its course. In those cases, the Verderers will not be consulted.

Parking spaces always require the consent of the Verderers when a new licence is issued or a licence is renewed with a new 60 year term. It was agreed that wherever possible, the Forestry Commission will seek to avoid agreeing to licences for parking on the Forest and property owners will be encouraged to park within their property curtilage.

As respects the property in Toms Lane where a licence was renewed with a 60 year term and with a parking space, the Forestry Commission accepts Verderers consent is required for the parking place. It appears from the planning application for the property that there is in fact plenty of space within the curtilage for parking. Mr Grugeon undertook to do his best to rescind the illegal licence and issue a new one without a parking space.

A discussion then took place regarding Section 18 (1) (a) which refers to the granting of rights of way and the making of ways.

The Verderers accept that the Forestry Commission may grant rights of way i.e. issue an access licence, and also grant consent for the making of ways without their consent. However, the Verderers struggle with the extent to which gravel is sometimes used to surface accesses. Throughout the Forest a significant amount of grazing is being lost due to gravelling. In response Mr Grugeon explained that Mr Sean Marsh, the Estates Officer, delivers all new access licences by hand, together with a letter explaining in detail when the occupiers should consult with the Forestry Commission as respects work on their accesses. Mr Marsh also explains the details of each licence and leaves his business card for ease of reference should the householder wish to contact him later.

The system explained by Mr Grugeon is felt to be good, but concern was expressed about what happens if Mr Marsh is not available. It was suggested that the Licence itself should be more specific. In order to better understand the system, Mr Grugeon was asked to provide the Clerk with a copy of a blank licence.

Action
PG

The Deputy Surveyor agreed to prepare a paper for consideration by the Verderers prior to the next Court, seeking to clarify the situations when the Forestry Commission will consult with the Verderers and how a 'new' licence would be defined.

Action
DS

2017/9070 ENCROACHMENTS, ENFORCEMENT & CAR FREE DEFENCES

RESUME

The Official Verderer explained that the Court would like to see greater enforcement as respects illegal parking on the Forest and inappropriate gravel.

In response, the Deputy Surveyor said that the Keepers do monitor their areas.

Concern was expressed that the verge protection works appear to be taking a long time. East Boldre has been on the list for some 4 years. The Deputy Surveyor explained that limited resources have delayed the work and the Forestry Commission has been trying to recruit a Verge Restoration Officer. It was agreed that early liaison with parish councils and residents is necessary to ensure understanding of the purpose of ditching and the installation of dragons teeth. Recently a complaint was received regarding Woodgreen and the work which has narrowed the entrances to an inclosure preventing parking in the bell mouth. In this instance, it was possible to explain that in fact a lot of consultation had taken place and continues, with the Parish Council involved, but it is accepted that it is not always possible to contact everyone. Further concern was expressed, however, that some of the work has had the effect of displacing vehicles onto other unprotected verges. This is regrettable and it is hoped that further work can be undertaken to resolve that problem in the near future.

Action
DS

Some small scale verge protection work is also being undertaken in Nomansland. This work has been approved by the Parish Council and discussed with local residents who may be affected.

2017/9071 HORSE DRAWN WAGON RIDES

DISCHARGE

The request for consent for a further three years (2017-2019) for the existing route in the Burley area was approved. The Forestry Commission advised that two other routes in the former consent, in Minstead and Brockenhurst, have been dropped.

2017/9072 WOODGREEN CRICKET CLUB

DISCHARGE

Mr Grugeon said he is waiting for the draft licence to be returned by the Club's solicitor. Meanwhile a site visit will take place. Mr Pasmore and Mr Readhead will attend with Mr Grugeon in order to discuss in particular, a solution to how to protect the practice wicket, as the Court felt that a tarpaulin held down with scaffold poles is not acceptable. The other item which remains unresolved is the Club's request for an equipment store. This will also be considered at the site meeting which Mr Grugeon will arrange.

Action
PG/AHP/DR

The Court requested a copy of the licence prior to consent being given. Mr Grugeon agreed to provide this. Action PG

2017/9073 BOUNDARY COTTAGE, BRAMSHAW TELEGRAPH DISCHARGE

Mr Grugeon advised the Court that Mr Sean Marsh had visited Boundary Cottage and he believes the gravel area is as originally agreed. This was accepted by the Court.

2017/9074 HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS MAINTAINED FENCING DISCHARGE

The map showing the extent of highways maintained fences has now been agreed with the Forestry Commission and the Clerk said that discussions are due to take place to agree which fences should be prioritised.

The list of defects has been updated. The Clerk was asked to ensure that Mr Tim Lawton receives a copy. Action Clerk

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2017/9075 REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE LIST

The Deputy Surveyor confirmed there are no changes to the list.

2017/9076 LATCHMORE STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT DISCHARGE

A brief discussion took place during which the Deputy Surveyor said the Forestry Commission understands and respect the decision taken by the HLS Board to focus future funding on a range of projects that will build on the success of completed conservation and restoration work across the New Forest.

He added that the Forestry Commission is disappointed that the hard work of many people, over several years, to develop and communicate evidence-based plans, including making adjustments to proposals in light of concerns raised, will not be taken forward for the time being.

Regular monitoring to measure change at the sites of most concern will continue under the remaining period of the HLS agreement.

ACTION LIST

2017/9077 BT CABLE AT CROCKFORD RESUME

An attempt has been made to bury the cable but the work has not been wholly successful. Mrs Westerhoff said she will make a site visit before the next Court. Action DW

2017/9078 DITCHING ALONG KINGS COPSE ROAD RESUME

An update on this item was requested. Action DS

2017/9079 VERGE PROTECTION WORKS AT FRITHAM RESUME

Mr Pasmore undertook to check on progress prior to the next Court. It is hoped that the partially completed work on the green near Fritham House can be finished. Action AHP

ENCROACHMENTS

2017/9080 ENCROACHMENTS LIST RESUME

An updated encroachments list was provided.

2017/9081 JOYRIDERS AT BLACKFIELD DISCHARGE

The Forestry Commission was asked to reinforce the car free defences at the Exbury end of Blackfield, near the new commoner's dwelling where joyriders have gained access to the Forest.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

2017/9082 BROOMY PLAIN ROAD VERGE RESTORATION RESUME

Drawings showing the proposed works to resolve the verge over-run problems on this road had been circulated to all members of the Court.

Detailed designs were requested as respects the removal of concrete on Stoney Cross in exchange for the loss of grazing which will result from the construction of passing places on the Broomy Plain Road.

The Court confirmed its support in principle for the proposals, subject to further details, in particular as respects how the verges will be protected in order to prevent the same problems occurring again in the future.

Additionally, it was felt that a means of making the passing places more obvious is required whilst bearing in mind the policy of not proliferating signage in the Forest.

The Deputy Surveyor said his team will work on the detailed designs with Hampshire County Council and bring plans back to the Court in February.

Action
DS

2017/9083 LAND AT LYNDHURST ROAD (ASHURST) RAILWAY STATION RESUME
March

The fence on the Forest boundary of a small strip of land which was sold to the Railway Company in 1858 is now in extremely poor condition. As a result, just before Christmas, cattle gained access to the nearby A35.

In accordance with the conditions of the 1858 indenture, land no longer required for railway purposes must revert to the Crown. The Railway House at Lyndhurst Road appears to be occupied by a person who is not in the current railway operators employ. It was therefore, felt that the house should also revert. However, within part of the ground floor of the property, there is a room containing electrical switchgear, presumably for the railway and so it was felt it may not be a simple matter to insist the house reverts as well as the land.

The Court decided that given the principle that the land should revert to the Forest, efforts should be made to achieve that. Apart from the dilapidated fence, the land itself is in very poor condition and in its present state could not be thrown open. The Court agreed that the cost of clearing the land of the accumulated rubbish and resolving the drainage issues, which are severely affecting the adjacent Forest lawn, could be covered by the monies held in the Railway Fund.

Responsibility for the railway car park fence is a further issue that will have to be resolved. At present neither Network Rail nor its franchisee, South West Trains, are prepared to accept responsibility.

The Deputy Surveyor confirmed that subject to the land being returned to a satisfactory condition, the Forestry Commission would be willing to take over the future ownership and management of the site. He added that the FC will not accept responsibility for the car park fence.

Mrs Westerhoff proposed that the land should return to the Forest and this was seconded by Miss Macnair. Eight members of the Court were in agreement and it was therefore resolved that the Clerk will proceed to contact the Crown Estate to explore the possibilities of it accepting the land back from Network Rail and subsequently passing it to the Forestry Commission.

Action
Clerk

ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2017/9084 CONCRETE BLOCKS OUTSIDE CULVERLEY FARM

RESUME

A complaint has been received from a commoner that some concrete blocks which were placed on the Forest outside Culverley Farm to protect mature Oak Trees whilst building work is undertaken are still in place and may be damaging the trees. The blocks were due to be removed after six months but as little work has been undertaken, they are still in place some two years on. The Forestry Commission was asked to investigate whether the blocks are likely to be causing any damage, to decide whether or not they need to remain and to let the Verderers know if there is any reason why they should not be removed.

Action
DS

2017/9085 DRONE ON BURLEY CRICKET PITCH

DISCHARGE

A drone is reportedly being flown from Burley Cricket Pitch. A member of the parish council approached the person responsible for the drone but was met with some abuse. A request was made for a small leaflet explaining why drones must not be flown over the Forest to be produced. This could be handed out by members of the Forestry Commission staff and officials from other organisations.

The Deputy Surveyor said he will liaise with staff to identify the best way of dealing with what is potentially an increasing problem. It was suggested that the Forestry Commission's Keepers should be more proactive in this respect.

Action
DS

2017/9086 PONIES STRIPPING BARK FROM BEECH TREES

DISCHARGE

The Court wished to know the position regarding the study that is to be undertaken to endeavour to establish why some ponies are stripping bark from Beech trees. The Deputy Surveyor said the Forestry Commission is working towards letting the contract from HLS funds, for research work but a tender process for the procurement of this work must be undertaken first.

2017/9087 CYCLISTS ON THE OPEN FOREST AT NIGHT

DISCHARGE

The Court was disappointed to hear that lines of cyclists with head torches can still be seen regularly crossing the Forest at night. The Forestry Commission was asked to take enforcement action via its team of keepers.

Action
DS

2017/9088	FLY POSTING	DISCHARGE
	There appears to have been a significant increase in fly posting throughout the Forest and the Deputy Surveyor was asked to ensure Forestry Commission staff remove them when they see them.	Action DS
2017/9089	QUEEN'S HOUSE CAR PARK	RESUME April
	Members of the Court expressed their frustration with the car park in which it is often impossible to find a space. The Clerk concurred! The Deputy Surveyor said that a planning application to extend the car park is being drawn up but added that at present funds do not exist to take the project forward.	Action DS
2017/9090	WOODGREEN CAR FREE DEFENCES	RESUME
	The very wide grass verges in the Godshill Wood area are now being subjected to damage by vehicles, as parking at other previously available areas has been prevented by ditching and the installation of dragons' teeth. There is an urgent need to ditch verges to prevent further damage. In addition, it was reported that several wicket gates which are used by horse-riders are now impassable as the new ditches are so close to the gates it is impossible to open and close them from horseback. The Forestry Commission was asked to rectify the situation. A discussion then took place concerning what is meant by 'next to the highway', in the Forestry Commission byelaws. The Deputy Surveyor was asked to provide a response at the February Court.	Action DS
2017/9091	FOREST LAWNS	RESUME
	The Court was concerned at the condition of some Forest lawns which are being flooded by impeded drainage. Denny is particularly bad. The problem is being caused by the drain being choked up with vegetation between Denny Lodge and Bishops Dyke. Water is discharging across the main passage approach as a consequence and this approach is becoming difficult to access, not least because the visitors have been throwing in timber. The Deputy Surveyor said he would ask the Open Forest team to investigate.	Action DS
2017/9092	VERDERERS' HALL	DISCHARGE
	New benches have been ordered for the Verderers' Hall along with a new press table. Mr Pasmore asked to see the design.	Action DS
	A request was made for a date to be added to the new window stonework to commemorate when the works were completed. This would be consistent with previous renovations of the Queen's House, such as the dates on the lead hoppers on the top of the gutter drain pipework.	Action DS

The Deputy Surveyor and Land Agent left the meeting

OTHER MATTERS ARISING

2017/9093	BYELAW ENFORCEMENT	DISCHARGE
	Mr Greenwood explained to the Court that he, Miss Macnair and Cllr Heron had considered the appeal by the commoner accused of breaching the byelaws whose VGS payment has been withheld.	

All three Verderers agreed that the commoner was guilty of deliberately failing to dispose of a carcass. They considered the penalty imposed by the VGS Sub Committee and expressed the view that for a first offence it may be regarded as a little harsh and suggested something more in line with those imposed by RPA for breaches of cross compliance may be more appropriate. This view was discussed. Other commoners who have been found to be in breach of byelaws or VGS rules have also been penalised by 100% of their payments being withdrawn and so this penalty is in line with those. The manner in which this commoner has gone about trying to obtain a change in the decision has not helped their case. Unfortunately significant exaggerations, accusations and untruths have been made by the commoner in various letters and emails that have been sent to the Court, to other organisations and to the local MP.

At the end of the discussion the Official Verderer asked the Court to decide whether the penalty of 100% of the commoners VGS payment being withheld, is still felt to be appropriate.

Mr Mills proposed it should remain at 100%. Mr Readhead seconded the proposal which was carried.

A letter will be prepared by the VGS Administrator, advising the commoner of the decision.

Action
OV/TW

2017/9094 NATIONAL GRID PROPOSALS FOR UNDERGROUNDING THE HIGH VOLTAGE PYLONS AND LINES IN THE NORTH OF THE FOREST DISCHARGE

The Court approved the proposed bore holes and trial pits subject to the usual three conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions and compensation for loss of grazing. In addition, the contractors will be advised that Bentonite must not be used on the Open Forest. Some concern was expressed at the method of covering the open pipes that will be driven into the ground and to that end, the local Agister and the representative from the CDA who has been attending site meetings with the National Grid will be asked to attend when the work is being done to check all is well.

Action
Clerk

MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2017/9095 BASIC PAYMENT SCHEME AFTER BREXIT – REPORT OF MEETING ARRANGED BY THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY RESUME

Mr Pasmore attended this meeting. He reported there is a keenness for everyone to work together, however, he felt it will be important to ensure that the process does not get bogged down with other matters which may affect the Forest following Brexit and which may not fall within the Verderers' remit. Mr Pasmore will report progress.

Action
AHP

Mrs Westerhoff remarked that it is essential that the Verderers are fully involved in any future subsidy systems that may affect commoning and the New Forest. The Chief Executive of the National Park has been asked to ensure she keeps the Court informed.

Mr Pasmore's paper will be circulated to all members of the Court.

Clerk

Because increasing stock numbers are a particular and urgent problem for the Verderers, it was agreed that the new Official Verderer will need to raise this with government separately from the work of Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre's committee.

2017/9096 NATIONAL COMMON LAND STAKEHOLDERS GROUP MEETING DISCHARGE

Mr Greenwood attended this meeting on behalf of the CDA.

Mr Greenwood added that following this meeting and discussions he has had elsewhere, he believes that direct payments will disappear and in future public funds will be allocated for the public good.

2017/9097 HOUSE OF COMMONS ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT COMMITTEE PAPER ENTITLED 'THE FUTURE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AFTER THE EU REFERENDUM' AND 'BRITISH AGRICULTURAL POLICY AFTER BREXIT' – NATURAL CAPITAL NETWORK – PAPER 5 1ST SEPTEMBER 2016 BY DIETER HELM DISCHARGE

Copies of these two papers were circulated.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

2017/9098 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR OCTOBER 2016 RESUME

The Financial Statement was noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2017/9099 COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HAMPSHIRE POLICE AND THE AGISTERS RESUME
March

Mr Mills advised the Court he will shortly be meeting with the Assistant Chief Constable. Mr Deakin asked if he could mention that there have been occasions lately where the Police have failed to pass on reports of accidents with stock to the Agisters.

Action
HM

2017/9100 BOVINE TB DISCHARGE

Mr Mills reported that sadly he has some confirmed cases of TB in his cattle.

2017/9101 KINGSTON GREAT COMMON DISCHARGE

The wire fence between the common and the Forest is down in some places. It is plain wire and should not pose a significant hazard to stock. The Court decided not to take action at present.

2017/9102 CARTA FORESTA DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett proposed that consideration should be given to celebrating the 800 year anniversary of the 1217 Carta Foresta. The Court agreed and asked Mr Dowsett to take the proposal forward.

Action
BD

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 1.53 p.m.

Dominic May

Official Verderer

22nd February 2017