

**MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013 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
	Miss D Macnair MBE	Elected Verderer
	Mr B Dowsett	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Mr A H Pasmore	Elected Verderer
	Mr D Readhead	Elected Verderer
	Mrs P Thorne	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister
APOLOGIES	Mr A Gerrelli	Elected Verderer
	Mr C Maton	National Park Appointed Verderer

**IN COMMITTEE in the Library**

- |           |   |        |
|-----------|---|--------|
| 2013/6544 | MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING   | RESUME |
|           | The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 20 <sup>th</sup> February 2013 were approved and signed by the Official Verderer.   |        |
|           |   |        |
| 2013/6545 | DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST  | RESUME |
|           | The Official Verderer, the Elected Verderers and Mrs Thorne all declared an interest in the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme.  |        |
|           | Mr Barry Dowsett advised the Court that he is a Forestry Commission Voluntary Ranger.   |        |
|           |   |        |
| 2013/6546 | CONDITION OF STOCK  | RESUME |
|           | The weather is continuing to impact on the stock. A brief dry spell was followed by further wet, cold conditions. The Head Agister reported that the Agister team is still busy removing ponies. Fortunately because of the stallion scheme, fewer foals were born last summer and so fewer foals were left on mares over winter. |        |
|           | Two foals have been born on the Forest already, but they were sired on their owners' property. One is at Linwood and the other on Canada Common.  |        |
|           | Miss Macnair remarked that she has been touring round the Forest judging mares for the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society's Forest Fed competition and that a lot of the ponies she has seen, particularly those entered in the competition, look extremely well.  |        |
|           |   |        |
| 2013/6547 | STOCK LOSING CONDITION AND REMOVED FROM THE FOREST  | RESUME |
|           | 82 animals were removed from the Forest in February as a result of losing condition. This compares with 71 in February 2012. The details are as follows:- 22 mares with yearlings (last year's foals), 10 mares, 41 fillies, 1 colt, 4 geldings and 4 cattle.   |        |

The Head Agister confirmed that a number of commoners do catch their own stock or help the Agisters to do so. Others don't do so much. A lot of commoners have full time jobs, others are incapacitated and some simply lack the necessary skill or experience. No commoner has complained about animals which the Agisters have removed.

VGS payment will be withheld in respect of animals which have been caught by the Agisters, but which it would be reasonable to expect the owner to have caught himself. These include animals which run very close to the owner's holding.

A discussion took place about whether additional penalties should be applied to those commoners who persistently fail to catch their own stock when they are perfectly able to do so. This idea may be subject to further debate later in the year and depending on the level of assistance the Agisters receive.

2013/6548 MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE RESUME

	Forest	Common	Total
Ponies	982	107	1089
Cattle	309	157	466
Donkeys	4	1	5
Total	1560		

2013/6549 AGISTER RIX DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer said that whilst out on the Forest recently recently, a pony was found which had become trapped in boggy ground. Agister Rix was called and the Official Verderer was very impressed with his very speedy response, and the manner in which he dealt with the animal.

2013/6550 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT RESUME

There are no byelaw enforcement issues at present.

**The Head Agister left the meeting**

2013/6551 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS RESUME

The Announcements and Decisions were approved.

2013/6552 A35 LITTER & FLY TIPPING DISCHARGE

The A35 has a lot of litter on the verges and there is a fly tip ( a quantity of builders rubbish) on the Forest side of one of the gateways into Burley Old Inclosure. The Clerk will report the litter to Hampshire Highways and the fly tip to the Forestry Commission.

Action  
SW

**OPEN COURT – 10.00 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall**

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mike Seddon, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest  
Mr Mark Street, Area Land Agent (New Forest)

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER**

2013/6553 MYOTONIA

Myotonia is a hereditary muscular disease. In December two Dutch New Forest pony foals had been diagnosed with Myotonia by the University of Utrecht. Prior to this discovery, the disease had only been known in goats and dogs. The disorder is characterised by increased muscular irritability and contraction with a decreased power of relaxation. If an affected foal is excited or startled, its muscles lock up suddenly, and the animal falls over and lays stiff for a few seconds. Ponies with Myotonia cannot be used either as competition or recreation ponies, as even at rest they can display symptoms. They may have difficulty rising after a period of rest, a stiff and stilted gait when walking, and a bunnyhop movement when running. In addition there are increased respiratory sounds and difficulty in swallowing. In other words, these foals are basically useless. There is no known treatment available

For a foal to develop Myotonia, it has been found through DNA testing that both sire & dam may be carriers of an abnormal or 'faulty' gene. Unfortunately, if a foal inherits only one faulty gene, it may be symptom free, but still a carrier. Others may be ill.

DNA testing has been carried out by the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society on all Forest-run stallions and I am pleased to report that all have proved negative for Myotonia. We are extremely relieved to know that our stallions are free of this disease. Additionally, after a detailed analysis of breeding lines by the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society, we can also report that the New Forest's mares are also unaffected by Myotonia.

2013/6554 BRIDGE AT NEWLANDS PLANTATION

At our last Court, Mrs Ailsa Farrand raised concern about the new bridge at the crossing of Dockens Water beside Newlands Plantation.

Verderer Mrs Pat Thorne and the local Agister did attend a site meeting. Having helped facilitate a resolution at that meeting, it was agreed no further action is required by the Court. It should be noted that this is really a matter for Hampshire County Council and the National Trust.

2013/6555 LITTER ON THE A31

The A31 bisects the New Forest from Cadnam to Ringwood, and brings environmental problems such as noise, pollution and litter. Litter from the A31 often ends up being blown onto the Forest itself. I would like take this opportunity to thank Enterprise Mouchel, the Highways Agency Contractor responsible for managing the A31, for picking litter from the verges this week, a job well done, which helps keep the New Forest safe for the stock and tidy for other users. Thank you, Enterprise Mouchel.

## **ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT**

2013/6556 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR JANUARY 2013

The Agisters attended 14 accidents compared with 6 in February last year.

9 ponies were killed, 1 of which was wearing a collar. 3 ponies were reported to have been involved in accidents, but nothing was found.

1 donkey was injured and a calf which was involved in an accident escaped unscathed.

1 accident occurred in daylight and another at twilight. The remainder were in the dark.

9 cars were involved and 1 coach.

4 drivers failed to report having collided with a commoners' animal.

Of the other 10, only 3 accidents involved local motorists.

The other drivers were from Bournemouth (the coach driver), Southampton, Whiteparish and Rockbourne. 3 drivers came from Salisbury.

6 accidents occurred on the B3078 and 1 on the B3079.

As to the other locations, 1 accident occurred at Crockford and another one close to Norley Wood Crossroads. Both therefore on the B3054 between Lymington and Hatchet Pond.

1 accident occurred at Goatspen which is on the road between Burley and the Holmsley Tea Rooms.

The other 4 accidents were at Parc Pale just outside Lyndhurst, at Wootton on the B3058, at Stoney Cross and at Pipers Wait.

The four unreported accidents were at Wootton where nothing was found, at Goatspen where a calf was uninjured, and two of the B3078 accidents at Black Gutter involving a bay mare in one accident and a chestnut gelding in the other. Both animals were badly injured and had to be destroyed.

It is disappointing that compared to last February last year, there has been a significant increase in accidents and also that the total number of animals killed and injured this year to date is 18 whereas last year at this time it was 10.

Obviously we hope this upward trend does not continue and we call on drivers crossing the Forest to please take more care.

## **PRESENTMENT BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR OF THE NEW FOREST**

There were no presentments from the Deputy Surveyor at this Court.

## **PRESENTMENTS**

2013/6557 EASTER CAMPSITES OPENING

Just over a month ago the CDA wrote to the Forestry Commission to express our concern that and I quote," ground conditions are worse/wetter than anyone remembers and current experience is that it is virtually impossible to drive any sort of vehicle on the Forest ,other

than on gravel/tarmac tracks, without causing horrendous damage.

Easter is very early this year and if the weather pattern continues it is difficult to see how some of the camp sites could open as normal without significant damage to grazing, which would take a very long time to recover.

We would ask that Forest Holidays recognises that such damage would be unacceptable and that fall back plans are put in place.”

Mr Pettit, Business Development Manager for Camping in the Forest, a Joint Venture between the Camping and Caravanning Club and the Forestry Commission replied, to set our mind at rest, and I quote “I expect there to be less campers. Sites with hard standing areas are able to use and direct customers to use them keeping off the grass. The worst areas of sites are cordoned off and vehicles and camping are not permitted. This year three sites, Ashurst, Ocknell and Longbeech are not opening until after Easter.....The New Forest managers are experienced with managing the sites to avoid damage to the ground. They are committed to conservation and green tourism. There is a team meeting in March which all the sites are attending and I will reinforce the message then.”

Immediately thereafter, the Forest enjoyed a rare dry spell and ground conditions improved. However “normal service” with regard to rainfall was soon resumed, the water table is at a record high and more heavy rain is forecast by the weekend.

A brief visit to Roundhill camp site yesterday afternoon showed a large amount of standing water and where contractors vehicles have strayed even slightly off the made up tracks, water filled ruts had resulted. And unfortunately the fragile turf and thin soil mean that some areas have not recovered from last summer's wear and tear in the rain.

We would urge the Verderers and the Forestry Commission to inspect all the camp sites opening for Easter, to agree in detail with Camping in the Forest, which areas of which sites are in a robust enough position to be used for camping and its associated off road traffic.

We would also encourage the Forestry Commission to play a more active role in regulating these sites so that their cumulative understanding of Forest ground conditions can guide Camping in the Forest.

This is a moment to put concern about long term damage to a fragile environment ahead of short term commercial gain.

### **IN COMMITTEE in the Library**

#### **CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS**

2013/6558 EASTER CAMPSITES OPENING

RESUME

The Verderers agreed with the CDA that allowing vehicles and caravans onto the Forest campsites in such wet conditions is likely to cause significant damage to fragile grazing. In response the Deputy Surveyor said he felt sure that Camping in the Forest (CITF) would not wish to cause damage either. He said CITF has already been in communication with the CDA over the matter and has tried to allay their fears.

The Deputy Surveyor explained that it is a condition of CITF's lease that it must act responsibly and must not damage the SSSI. He undertook to reinforce that message and then went on to say that apart from the environmental/social considerations, it is not in the organisation's

commercial interest to allow campsites to become unattractive to campers.

Several campsites are not opening until late April, namely Ashurst, Ocknell and Longbeech. The Deputy Surveyor said that on those sites that are opening, the Campsite Wardens will actively direct campers to areas where there is hard standing. A discussion then took place about how many caravans could be accommodated on hard standing on the various sites. The Verderers pointed out that Denny, which is one of the sites which will open for Easter, has virtually no hard standing except at the back of the site where it might be possible to take half a dozen vans. Conversely, Ocknell, which is to remain shut, probably has more capacity because of the concrete 'frying pans' left over from the war. It was suggested Ocknell could be opened up as an overflow, but the Deputy Surveyor said that the site is not ready and wardens are not on site. It is difficult to move wardens from one site to another at short notice.

Actions  
MS / SW

The Official Verderer pointed out that there are no hard standing pitches on Roundhill. They are all grass which will be at significant risk of damage as soon as vehicles are driven across it.

Concern was expressed about what guidelines exist to assist CITF in managing the sites in poor weather conditions. The question was also asked, whether the sites each has a management plan? In response, Mr Street said there is a tri-partite agreement between the Forestry Commission, Natural England and CITF which is designed to ensure the SSSI is protected. A copy of this agreement will be provided to the Clerk who will then circulate the document to members of the Court.

Fortunately demand is low at the moment due to the cold wet weather, which will help ensure the sites that are open are not put under too much pressure.

The Deputy Surveyor said he will contact CITF again as a matter of urgency and remind them that they must take all reasonable possible steps to ensure there is minimal impact on the ground. This will be put in writing and at the same time the Deputy Surveyor will ask CITF ensure their managers re-direct campers to the most robust areas on their sites, and if necessary to move campers between sites in order to manage the occupancy of each site to ensure damage is minimised. They will also be encouraged to cordon off areas where damage is most likely to be caused. The Deputy Surveyor also undertook to ask how instructions are disseminated to the campsite managers.

The Verderers remained sceptical that damage can be avoided if the campsites open. It was agreed that over the Easter Bank Holiday, or shortly afterwards, Verderers will inspect the campsites in their area and report any problems to the Clerk. The Clerk will in turn forward the information to the Deputy Surveyor who will in turn take up any issues with CITF.

Several problems had been identified concerning the setting up on Roundhill Campsite:-

- Some damage has been caused to the grazing by vehicles delivering and moving the toilet blocks into place. The worst damage being at the block which is situated alongside the main track from the Campsite entrance towards the Water Tower.

- Trackside potholes have been filled with gravel and have not been properly reinstated with soil.
- The gravel behind the toilet blocks has not been taken up as agreed and neither have the toilet blocks been rearranged as agreed and expected.
- The assistant wardens' caravans which are sited outside the site manager's compound are some way from the electric hook-ups with the result that cables are trailing across the Open Forest.

The Verderers were particularly concerned that as the Warden had clearly been unable to manage the set up at Roundhill without damage being caused, how is he/she going to manage visitors in order to avoid further damage.

In response, the Deputy Surveyor said that efforts were made to prevent damage to the grass whilst the toilet blocks were being put in place. In order to cause minimal damage, drivers of the large delivery vehicles were forbidden from driving on the grass and forklift trucks were only used to lift in the water tanks. It is where the forklifts were working that there is damage to the grazing. The Deputy Surveyor agreed that gravel should not be used to fill potholes. CITF will be reinstating the ground around the middle toilet block where most of the damage has been reported.

The Deputy Surveyor asked the Verderers to bear in mind that all activities on the Forest, including commoning and Forest management, cause some damage. Camping has been permitted on the Forest for years and there is no doubt that it does some damage. It is a matter of ensuring that any damage is kept to a minimum.

## **NEW SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

2013/6559 ICE CREAM TRADING

DISCHARGE

The Forestry Commission sought approval to substitute the agreed ice cream van site at Cadnam Cricket Pitch, for Holidays Hill Reptile Centre. The location would only be used when the Reptile Centre is open From April to September each year and all other conditions relating to the consent would continue to apply.

In response, Mr Pasmore said he is not happy about intensifying the use of this site which he believes is illegal and in an inappropriate place. He felt the New Forest Association should have the opportunity to comment and suggested the request should be made by Presentment in Open Court.

Members of the Court understood and did not disagree with Mr Pasmore.

The Deputy Surveyor, however, expressed amazement as he pointed out Cadnam Cricket Pitch is on Open Forest where the stock has access to the ice cream van and its customers, where at Holidays Hill, the site is inclosed. He considered the request falls into the de minimis category which does not require a Presentment. He also felt that the ice cream van would not result in escalating the use of the site as people are unlikely to drive to the site just for an ice cream.

Mr Pasmore's response was that the inclosures have a specific statutory purpose under the New Forest Acts, and that is the growing of trees, not for recreational facilities. The Deputy Surveyor's response was that he believed that some years ago consents for certain activities were regularised and the Reptile Centre was included. He felt this minor change to the ice cream sites should be agreed.

The Official Verderer decided that in the first instance, a vote should be taken as to whether the matter should be raised in Open Court by Presentment, or decided upon now, and he asked the Verderers individually for their views. A majority expressed the view that the matter should be decided upon immediately without it being raised in Open Court by Presentment.

The Deputy Surveyor then pointed out that the Ice Cream Trading agreement will be brought back to the Court at the end of this season in any case, and he requested temporary agreement to the ice cream van being moved from Cadnam to the Reptile Centre until the review date.

The Official Verderer again canvassed the views of the Court and a majority of the Court agreed that the ice cream van from Cadnam Cricket Pitch should be allowed to move to the Reptile Centre, until the review date.

The request was therefore granted. The Official Verderer thanked Mr Pasmore for bringing the subject of the legality of the Reptile Centre to the attention of the Court.

2013/6560    ROUNDHILL WATER TOWER – SSE PROPOSED RELOCATION OF POLE MOUNTED TRANSFORMER, ROUNDHILL CAMPSITE    DISCHARGE

Subject to the pole remaining within the envelope of trees surrounding the water tower, the Court agreed the re-siting of the pole. The Court also requested that the transformer be painted an appropriate colour for its location, such as grey or dark green. The approval is also subject to the three usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

Action  
MStr

2013/6561    RECONFIGURATION OF FAWLEY BOX GATES (A326)    DISCHARGE

The Court considered the proposal to reconfigure these box gates, but members of the Court were not convinced of the need for the work. Disabled access is impossible due to the muddy conditions on both sides of the gates and requests to surface what is currently a grassy ride would be against all policy. The new box gate design would be likely to trap an animal which may get into the box and not be able to return to the Forest due to the orientation of the inner gate. It could also result in animals finding it easier to gain access to the A326. Local horse riders, whose opinions were canvassed by Mr Deakin, do not appear to have a problem with the present box gate arrangement. The Court, therefore, declined to approve the new box gates, mainly because they are not considered necessary.

What is of concern is the condition of the adjacent Industrial Estate fencing. Herras panels have been used to reinforce the fence, but these are now in a very poor state of repair. The Clerk reported serious problems at this location in the recent past with stock finding its way out

Action  
SW

onto the main road. She undertook to contact the building firm which it is believed owns the fence in the hope that the company will undertake urgent and necessary repairs.

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

2013/6562	BRAMSHAW GOLF CLUB	RESUME
	New greens and tees need specific consent. The Forestry Commission and the Golf Club will therefore prepare a submission for consideration by the Court.	Actions MStr
	Mrs Westerhoff asked if the Management Plan could be reviewed in that the Golf Course has left in Appendix 5 listing pesticides and fungicides which were not agreed by NE. NE's consented list is less prominent in the document and this could easily lead to the Golf Club's staff using unconsented chemicals.	
2013/6563	NEW FOREST GOLF CLUB	DISCHARGE
	The proposal to replace the two old bridges with a new causeway of a design favoured by Natural England was approved subject to the usual three conditions.	
2013/6564	BROKEN POST AT CADMAN'S POOL	RESUME
	Further information is awaited from British Telecom in connection with this installation. Mr Street is dealing with the matter.	Action MStr
2013/6565	DRIFT MANAGEMENT	RESUME
	The Drift Management Review is underway and will be completed in time for this year's drifts.	Action RD/SW/JRG
2013/6566	REQUEST FOR SPEAKER – BROCKENHURST PARISH COUNCIL	DISCHARGE
	The Clerk reported that Brockenhurst Parish Council has requested a speaker at its Annual Parish Meeting on Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April. Mr Deakin agreed to go along, together with the Head Agister.	Action RD/JRG/SW
2013/6567	DEAD PONIES IN INCLOSURES	RESUME
	Mrs Westerhoff will go back to Natural England regarding cicadas.	Action DW

**SSSI RESTORATION WORKS**

2013/6568	SNAGGING LIST	RESUME
	An updated snagging list was not provided as there are very little changes.	
2013/6569	ISLANDS THORNS RESTORATION	RESUME
	The Deputy Surveyor asked for this to be resumed in April.	Action MS

## ENCROACHMENTS

2013/6570 ENCROACHMENT LIST DISCHARGE

Nothing has been added to the list.

### THE BEECHES, BURLEY

Mr Street reported that he has reached agreement with the owner of this property. A new licence has been issued which restricts the development of the old access. Compensation for the damage caused by the builders has been agreed.

Actions  
MStr

### WATER BOARD GRAVEL

The water board has replaced the pea shingle with gravel and is paying for dragons teeth on the splay.

### NEW GATE OPPOSITE COOMBES GATE FARM, GENGIS HOUSE

The gate cannot be used because it is installed over a large ditch. It will be monitored to ensure the ditch is not in-filled.

### BRAMLEY HOUSE – SHOBLEY

It is believed a new gate may have been constructed. Mr Street said he is investigating.

### BURLEY SCHOOL PARKING

Miss Macnair expressed concern that parents are parking on a gravel area opposite the school meaning that children are running across the road to school. She felt this is very dangerous and asked if the large area of gravel that was a bus turning area (no longer required) could be reinstated as grazing. Miss Macnair also asked if the track to the Moorhill Hotel could be narrowed and car free ditches dug.

### LITTLE HAY

Mr Street is investigating a large area of gravel outside the pedestrian gate. He said there are other issues at this property.

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2013/6571 CYCLING DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor confirmed the installation of the new "no cycling" signage on the marker posts is underway and scheduled for completion before Easter.

2013/6572 GUIDED TRAIL THROUGH ASHLEY WALK DISCHARGE

Mr Pasmore asked if the Forestry Commission is aware of the rumour that the National Park wishes to establish a guided trail through Ashley Walk to celebrate the WW2 'The New Forest Remembers' project. The Deputy Surveyor said he has received no formal application. This is the largest of the Tranquil Areas and the Court felt a trail would be inappropriate in such

an area. As the project is funded under the HLS, the Official Verderer suggested he raise it at the HLS board meeting in early April and this was welcomed.

Action  
OV

### **The Deputy Surveyor and Mr Street left the meeting**

### **ENCROACHMENTS NOT INVOLVING THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

There were no encroachments not involving the Forestry Commission to discuss and it was agreed this subject will no longer appear automatically on the Agenda.

### **OTHER MATTERS ARISING**

2013/6573 PROPOSAL TO INDEX THE COURT MINUTES DISCHARGE

The Clerk said that to date she has not succeeded in identifying potential funding. It was therefore agreed that the matter should be discharged for the time being.

2013/6574 STALLION BLOODLINES SCHEME DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin reported that for a number of reasons it has been decided not to repeat the Bloodline Scheme this year. Two colts which were in the scheme have died and in any event, it is now too late for this year. It has been decided to put the Scheme on hold pending details on a Futurity Scheme which is currently being considered by the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society.

Miss Macnair referred to a recent letter from the Rare Breeds Survival Trust which has stated that the New Forest Pony is on the border of being classed as a rare breed as a consequence of the currently relatively small number of breeding mares having foals.

### **THE HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME & THE VERDERERS' GRAZING SCHEME**

2013/6575 HLS REPORT RESUME

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April at 2.30 p.m. The AGM follows at 5.00 p.m. to which all Verderers are welcome.

2013/6576 VGS REPORT RESUME

Payments to the Forest commoners were sent out at the end of February. Payments to commoners turning out on the Commons will be sent as soon as the National Trust's payment has been received.

Action  
CD

2013/6577 FOREST AND COMMON MARKING FEES DISCHARGE

Two commoners who have historically paid marking fees at Common Rate are now claiming their animals are running on the Forest and therefore they now wish to pay at the Forest rate. This may be because the VGS payment for Forest animals is higher than that payable for animals on the commons.

The Court decided that the two commoners should be asked to pay at the same commons rate as last year. If they insist on changing to forest rate, they need to make a good case to explain why their animals have

suddenly moved, or why they were paying the incorrect rate of marking fee previously. The 75% rule will apply and the Court may audit their animals to confirm where they are running and ensure compliance. It was agreed this decision must be communicated to the Agisters as soon as possible.

Action  
RD

#### **MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS**

2013/6578 EQUIFORUM

DISCHARGE

Miss Macnair reported that Defra intends to tighten up on passports. There will be a new central database, not funded by Defra, but via a levy of £2.00 on each passport issued. In addition, the number of passport issuing organisations is to be reduced. Passport design is to be improved in order to make them more difficult to falsify. The New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society passport is being used as a model.

Defra is increasingly worried about diseases being introduced from overseas. It has been suggested that border controls may be significantly strengthened with vehicles coming from countries where diseases are known to be endemic being fumigated upon arrival.

2013/6579 RECREATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY WORKING GROUP (RMSWG) DISCHARGE

The National Park Authority is evaluating the methodology behind the definition of the tranquil areas by 'ground truthing'.

The Erosion Report has attracted huge criticism from the New Forest Equestrian Association, but it has now been accepted as being insufficiently scientific and is therefore of limited use. A new front page has been produced to express this.

The Forestry Commission has engaged a student to look at recreational facilities and what influences behaviour.

The future of the RMSWG is under consideration and may be abandoned. The National Park is looking at how to manage recreation and an advisory group may be set up. The RMSWG has agreed to do nothing more until the NPA has decided on a way forward.

2013/6580 ROCKFORD BOOTCAMP

RESUME

Mr Deakin said that the Rockford Bootcamp is the source of considerable concern. The National Trust has granted a 6 month licence reportedly with the agreement of Natural England. Mrs Westerhoff said she will check with NE. The Clerk said she spoke to Mr Phil Marshall, the Countryside Manager for the National Trust in the Forest, but he said that the licence had already been issued. The Clerk said she made Mr Marshall aware that the Court is unhappy about the activities of the Bootcamp. Mr Phil Marshall has now left the National Trust.

Action  
DW

#### **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

2013/6581 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR JANUARY 2013

RESUME

The financial statement for February 2013 was approved.

2013/6582 AUDITOR

RESUME

The Official Verderer said that he is giving consideration to appointing a different auditor. The Court agreed that he, and the Clerk, should be authorised to choose a suitable auditor.

### **STAFF MATTERS (including the Staff Committee)**

There were no specific matters to discuss.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

2013/6583 HEALTH & SAFETY REVIEW

RESUME

The review is continuing.

Action  
RD/JRG/SW

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

2013/6584 ECHO CYCLING ROUTES

DISCHARGE

It was reported that the Echo advertises and recommends a different cycle route in the Forest each week. It was suggested that a check should be undertaken to ensure the routes are on the waymarked cycle network.

Action  
SW

2013/6585 WIGGLE

RESUME

The Wiggle cycling event is scheduled for the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> April. The event takes place wholly on the public highway and therefore falls outside the remit of the Court and the Forestry Commission. There is, however, growing disquiet in the Forest about the size of this year's event which may involve 5,800 entrants.

The Forestry Commission is to be asked whether New Park Events licence enables it to host such an event in New Park. The Clerk said she will ask Mr Street.

Action  
SW

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 13.25 hrs.