

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 19th March 2014 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 B Dowsett	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Miss D Macnair MBE	Senior Elected Verderer (from 2014/7172)
	Mr C Maton	National Park Appointed Verderer
	Mr G M H Mills	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mr D Readhead	Elected Verderer
	Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister (to 7046)
APOLOGIES:	Mr A Gerrelli	Elected Verderer
	Mr R Stride	Co-opted Verderer

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2014/7153 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 19th February 2014 were agreed and signed.

2014/7154 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

The Official Verderer and the Elected Verderers declared an interest in the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme and the Verderers Grazing Scheme.

The Official Verderer, Mr Deakin, Miss Macnair and Mr Readhead are all members of the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society.

Mr Dowsett advised the Court that he is a Forestry Commission Voluntary Ranger.

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.

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

Mr Maton reminded the Court that he is a Forestry Commission contractor, and that he is involved with a tender to re-fence Longmeadow (2014/7179).

2014/7155 CONDITION OF STOCK RESUME

The Head Agister reported that stock looks remarkably well for the time of year, helped by the recent improvement in the weather. Fewer animals are being removed from the Forest than usual for the time of year.

Bearing in mind the recent increase in stock depastured, particularly cattle,

it was asked if the forest currently had less forage available for the time of year. The Head Agister commented that he did not consider the forest to be overgrazed, and that it doesn't look more bare than usual for the time of year.

The burning programme is progressing well with three teams out.

2014/7156 STRANGLES RESUME

The outbreak of strangles is continuing, with animals succumbing in Pilley, Brockenhurst, Matley, Lyndhurst Racecourse and Bolton's Bench. Just over 20 ponies have so far contracted the illness.

The Court was reminded that the policy, as recommended by the Court's veterinary advisor, continues to be to leave animals showing signs of strangles on the Forest, unless their condition deteriorates.

2014/7157 STOCK LOSING CONDITION AND REMOVED FROM THE FOREST RESUME

Mares with foals – 1
Mares with yearlings – 7
Mares – 9
Fillies – 30
Geldings – 1
Cattle 1

The total removed last month was 49 compared with 82 in the same period last year.

The year to date figure is 102. In 2013 it was 173.

2014/7158 MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE RESUME

	Forest	Common	Total
Ponies	864	120	984
Cattle	263	134	397
Donkeys	14	3	17
Pigs	0	1	1
Sheep	0	0	0
Total	1141	159	1399

Ponies, cattle and donkeys on the Forest – 1141
Ponies, cattle and donkeys on the Common – 257
Total Ponies, Cattle and Donkeys – 1398

2014/7159 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT DISCHARGE

A commoner has reportedly fed stock at the top of the track leading to the common from Kewlake Lane at Cadnam Common without approval. Some damage to a track has been reported. The commoner concerned has been spoken to by the National Trust and the VGS Manager and it is understood he is no longer feeding on the common.

The Head Agister left the meeting

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2014/7160 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS RESUME

The announcements and decisions were approved.

2014/7161 LAND AT SANDY DOWN DISCHARGE

Consideration was given to whether this area of land, which is east of the A337 could be fenced and grazed. The status of the land will be investigated with the Forestry Commission.

See Minute
2014/7193
below

2014/7162 A337 FENCING AND LAYBY AT SETLEY RESUME

The Official Verderer commented that the fencing between the junction opposite the Filly Inn, all the way down to Cobblers Corner is in poor condition. In particular the area around the layby is very poor as people climb over the fence here to access the Forest. It was agreed to investigate the removal of the layby by Hampshire County Highways or whether the fence at that point could be the more robust post and rail construction with stock netting.

Action
Clerk

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

2014/7163 GARDEN WASTE

We are approaching the time of year when we will all be cutting our lawns and sorting out our gardens after the winter. Please may we remind residents that lawn mowings are very dangerous to ponies and donkeys and they must not be left where the animals can get to them. Tipping your grass cuttings over the fence or emptying a bag on the Open Forest may be a cheap and easy way of disposing of garden waste, but it can result in very sick or even dead ponies. Mown grass left in a heap heats up, and when eaten, the resulting gasses that accumulate in the stomach of a pony or donkey can result in a very painful death for the unfortunate animal.

2014/7164 BOUNDARY FENCING

In the spring, the grass in gardens and fields grows faster than on the Forest which doesn't grow until late May or early June. As a result, there is a greater incentive for Forest animals to try to gain access to private property. If your fence is not fully stock proof you may wake up to find a herd of cows or ponies on your lawn. It is the responsibility of property owners to fence out legally depastured stock and we would be very grateful if everyone would please check their boundaries to make sure they are secure. Cattle grids also often require regular attention. During the winter they often fill up with debris and that can encourage animals to try to walk across them.

2014/7165 RICHARD STRIDE

The end of the month is a landmark occasion for one of my fellow Verderers. Richard Stride retires from the Forestry Commission on 31st March, having completed 47 years of service. The last 20 years have been as Works Supervisor for the Open Forest. On behalf of the Verderers and Commoners, I would like to express our thanks to you, Richard, for your hard work maintaining the Open Forest to the benefit of commoning and the environment.

2014/7166 COLIN DRAPER

Colin Draper retires at the end of March, so this is your last Court Colin. Colin joined our office staff in 2004, to administer the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. He was instrumental, with his great tact and diplomacy, in persuading commoners to join the scheme. More recently, the Countryside Stewardship Scheme was replaced by the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, and Colin very ably took on the additional responsibilities connected with it, including the new Verderers' Grazing Scheme. During my three years as Official Verderer, Colin has worked extremely hard to make the Verderers' Grazing Scheme become the huge success that it is now. I am very sorry to lose Colin's good wisdom and common sense; he has been a great servant to the Verderers and to me too. Thank you, Colin, and we wish you a long and happy retirement.

2014/7167 LEANNE SARGEANT

Some of you will already have met Leanne Sargeant, who is taking over from Colin administering the Verderers' Grazing Scheme. During her three month handover with Colin, Leanne has rapidly come up to speed with the intricacies of the VGS and we are confident that she will run it very efficiently. Welcome, Leanne.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2014/7168 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2014

I am pleased to report that the number of accidents last month were significantly less than in February last year. The Agisters attended 5 accidents in February this year compared with 14 in February last year.

The total number of animals killed and injured at the end of February 2014 is 11, compared with 18 in the same period last year.

In February, 1 pony, 1 donkey and a sheep were killed or had to be destroyed.

1 pony and a donkey were uninjured.

1 accident occurred in daylight, 2 in twilight and 2 in the dark.

2 of the vehicles involved were cars or light commercials,

2 motorists were local but the bad news is the other 3 accidents were not reported.

The accidents occurred at Bunkers Hill Beaulieu, where a pony with a collar escaped injury; outside Bramshaw Church where the sheep was killed (in daylight); at Longcross where the donkey was killed; between Hilltop and Ipers Bridge where the pony was killed and at Hatchet Pond where nothing was found following a report that a pony had been involved in a collision.

We issued a press statement in respect of the hit and run accident involving the donkey which was killed on Sunday 16th February at 6.45 p.m. at Longcross on the B3078 but to date we have received no information in connection with the accident.

On the subject of hit and runs, there was another on Tuesday, 4th March. This accident was also the subject of a press release. Between Hill Top and Ipers Bridge, an in-calf cow was hit at approximately 8.40 p.m. The cow was fatally injured. The driver did not stop and has not reported the accident. We have received some information as a result of the press release and the Police are actively following up some useful leads. However, we could still do with further information so if anyone knows anything that might lead us to be

able to confirm who was driving a BMW which we believe collided with the cow, we would be very pleased to hear from them. In this case, a £500 reward has been offered by the owner of the cow. This is in addition to the £1,000 reward payable under the Verderers Reward Scheme.

Yet another hit and run occurred on Saturday evening at 10.52p.m. A dun mare was fatally injured at South Weirs by a vehicle which failed to stop. The mare's back was broken and she was humanely destroyed by Agister Peter Rix. We believe the vehicle involved may have been a 4 x 4, or a van or larger vehicle. Once again, a reward may be payable for information leading to the successful conviction of the driver involved.

In January's Court, I reported that someone had been leaving carrots on the verge of the B3078. Subsequently, more carrots were found at Picket Post. The person or persons responsible are endangering Forest stock by encouraging animals to the roadside and we very much wish that they would stop.

PRESENTMENT ON BEHALF OF THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR OF THE NEW FOREST

2014/7169 FALLEN TIMBER

At February's Court Mr Barry Topp expressed his concern about the quantity of fallen timber present in a number of the ancient and ornamental woodlands. Mr Topp called for local people to be able to buy such fallen wood and remove it for firewood.

As Mr Topp recognised in his presentment the deadwood within the ancient and ornamental woods is an important component of the environment and for the birds, insects and fungi that depend on it. The Verderers, Natural England and Forestry Commission are signatories to the Management Plan for the New Forest Special Area of Conservation which establishes the requirement to increase and maintain deadwood levels within the areas woodlands. Put simply fallen wood should be present.

That said, there have been discussions between representatives of the Forestry Commission, Natural England and the commoning community about whether the quantity of fallen wood, in some places, is becoming excessive. Unsurprisingly there are different views however representatives of these organisations will be visiting a selection of woodlands to review the situation.

Mr Topp also called for fallen timber to be sold to local people. Within the requirements of the SAC, and also sustainable woodland management standards, the Forestry Commission continues to sell firewood to both local and larger scale buyers. Where firewood is available, sales of up to 5m³ can be made to local people on request. Firewood parcels greater than 5m³ will be advertised and sold by tender, details for which can be found on our web site.

2014/7170 HLS WETLAND RESTORATIONS

Also in February, Mrs Bunyard made a presentment about some of the wetland restorations undertaken on the Forest; specifically those at Amberslade and Buckherd Bottom. I wish to make clear that the Forestry Commission does not share Mrs Bunyard's pessimism about the success of these schemes and that other organisations with an interest in the Forest's culture and environment remain supportive of past and ongoing restoration works.

The restorations at Amberslade and Buckherd Bottom represent a small fraction of the number of sites worked under the LIFE3, Pathfinder and now HLS Projects. While ideally once a particular site has undergone restoration no further interventions will be necessary, the Forestry Commission has consistently recognised that we may need to return to site to

maintain or repair where nature has not behaved quite as expected. This is not a failure but a fact of reality.

At both Amberslade and Buckherd Bottom works to stabilise mire systems were prioritised in 2007 and 2008. Without these works there was a risk of further significant erosion of the internationally important mire systems. It was always the intention to continue restoration further downstream and this is planned for both sites.

At Amberslade, it is intended that the restoration be continued downstream from the current temporary end point. This is planned for later this year.

At Buckherd Bottom, some small repairs around the clay plugs within the restored stretches of watercourse will be completed this summer, prior to completion of further phases of restoration, downstream, in future years.

Finally, I would like to remind the Court that, where wetland restorations have been completed in recent years, the condition of the Forest SSSI is assessed to be improving.

PRESENTMENTS

2014/7171 COLIN DRAPER

This was not a formal presentment by Mrs Mary Gray.

'On behalf of our commoning family, the Grays, north of the Forest!!

We are here this morning to express our gratitude for what has not been an easy passage for Colin Draper.

The democratic way he has managed to talk us through situations the Verderers wish to convey to us has not always been easy to swallow, particularly for 'strong minded' commoners!!!

More than once my personal opinion, of his situation has been "don't shoot the messenger".

He will be sorely missed. Good Luck, with fair health Colin, you so deserve!!

Mary Gray on behalf of all the Gray Family'.

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

Miss Macnair joined the meeting.

NEW SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2014/7172 SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ELECTRICITY (SSE) UNDERGROUND DISCHARGE
ELECTRICITY SUPPLY – PICKET POST, A31

The proposed replacement of the transformer and cabling was approved subject to the following conditions:-

- Removal of the old cable and the new cable laid in the same trench.
- The three usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

2014/7173 SSE MAINTENANCE WORKS AT HINCHELEA SUBSTATION DISCHARGE

The request for a fenced compound on the Open Forest outside the substation to accommodate a welfare unit and material store for up to six months from September 2014 was approved subject to the following conditions :-

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MSt

- The three usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.
- That the work is completed in the shortest possible time in order to minimise damage to the grazing.

2014/7174 SSE PROPOSED MAINTANANCE WORKS – ELLINGHAM AREA DISCHARGE

The proposals to upgrade the existing low voltage distribution network (including replacement of the poles) in this area were approved. However, a number of conditions were imposed including taking the necessary steps to protect Woodlark breeding areas in the vicinity of Appleslade Farm and Blackheath; avoidance of damage to very wet areas; stock guards being placed on straining wires instead of the yellow high visibly plastic covering; and the removal of any metal work and wires from poles which are left (temporarily) laying out on the Forest. Mrs Westerhoff provided a list of matters about which she had concerns to Mr Street.

In addition, the three usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc., apply.

Mrs Westerhoff commented that whilst she was inspecting the site around Appleslade Farm she found an area of land where there is a mess of old fencing, a broken gate and tin shed. It should be fenced off properly if it is private land.

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Clerk

2014/7175 GRUFFALO TRAILS DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor advised the Court of the proposals for these trails which are planned for this summer at Bolderwood in the Inclosure and also on Hollands Wood, Ashurst, Roundhill, Holmsley and Ocknell campsites. The trails will consist of 10 small temporary panels indicating the route of each self-led trail. In the campsites the panels will only be sited on hard standing and will be removed at the end of the summer. The trails are designed to educate children about the countryside and will contain a number of messages.

The three usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc., apply.

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

2014/7176	DRIFTS AND ACTIONS FROM THE DRIFT WASH-UP MEETING	DISCHARGE
	<p>The Deputy Surveyor said that the Forestry Commission will not be changing any of the bridges following a suggestion that certain bridges at Kings Copse are too narrow. He added that the double barrier has now been installed on the car park at Picket Post which can now be closed during the drift in that area.</p>	
2014/7177	VINNEY RIDGE DRIFTWAY	RESUME June 2014
	<p>The Deputy Surveyor said he will bring proposals to a future Court.</p>	
2014/7178	FINANCIAL LIABILITY FOR BREACHES OF HLS CROSS COMPLIANCE CONDITIONS	RESUME
	<p>The RPA report is awaited.</p> <p>Site visits to the New Forest Golf Club and Bramshaw Golf Club by the management of the Burley Golf Club have now taken place which will help the latter in reducing the excessive paraphernalia on their course.</p>	Action MSt
2014/7179	LONG MEADOW FENCE	DISCHARGE
	<p>The tree which is still on the fence cannot be removed until ground conditions improve. The VGS Manager has sent out a tender for the replacement of the fence.</p>	Action VGS Administrator
2014/7180	CAMPING PROGRAMME FOR 2014	DISCHARGE
	<p>Mr Readhead reported on a recent meeting with Camping in the Forest. Assurances have been received concerning prevention of damage if the weather deteriorates again. Minutes of the meeting will be available in due course.</p> <p>The problem at Hollands Wood following the removal of the warden's caravan will be addressed to ensure such problems do not occur in the future. In future the sewage services should be capped off more securely, and the electricity socket should be left safe.</p> <p>In Setthorns the works on the bridge should be completed by July.</p> <p>The Clerk mentioned that as in previous years, she has received an invitation for the Head Agister or herself to talk to the Campsite Wardens at the start of the season.</p>	

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2014/7181	REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE LIST (FORMERLY THE SNAGGING LIST)	RESUME
	<p>Queen's Meadow and Pitts Wood remain on the list.</p>	

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2014/7182 SLUFTERS NORTH DISCHARGE

Mrs Westerhoff's notes following the site visit have been given to the Deputy Surveyor for consideration when the proposals are drafted.

2014/7183 PLANNING CONSENTS DISCHARGE

Land Use Consultants have been appointed to prepare the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the HLS works in the Latchmore Catchment.

The Forestry Commission is seeking advice from the National Park Authority concerning the need for planning consents and EIAs for the various other schemes as and when they are drawn up.

ENCROACHMENTS

2014/7184 ENCROACHMENT LIST RESUME

A new list was circulated.

2014/7185 HILL TOP LODGE (formerly Pointers Yard) DISCHARGE

Mr Street said the position of the boundary is being checked against the Title plan. It is thought that following the removal of an over grown hedge, the new fence is inside the property's boundary although the stays are clearly on Crown Land. The matter is being dealt with and will remain on the Encroachment List which the Court receives each month until a satisfactory resolution is achieved.

2014/7186 FENCE BEHIND PICKET POST FILLING STATION DISCHARGE

Investigations are ongoing.

2014/7187 FENCE & STILE OPPOSITE OSMONDS BUSHES CAR PARK DISCHARGE

The fence is being realigned. The Court agreed the stile should be retained as the public park in the car park to access the Forest opposite and without the stile, the fence will undoubtedly be broken down and require regular repair. Hampshire County Highways has been advised.

2014/7188 DAMAGE TO THE FOREST AT FOREST ROAD BURLEY DISCHARGE

The commoner who has caused significant damage to the Open Forest by accessing a field entrance with a tractor has had his VGS payment withheld.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2014/7189 PICKET POST LITTER DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett advised the Court that at his request, Volunteer Rangers litter picked the area around the car park at Picket Post. The Court was pleased to hear that a condition of the planning permission for the new MacDonalds restaurant is that the site and surrounding area must be kept clear of litter.

2014/7190	HINCHESLEA SUBSTATION –BRASH CLEARANCE	DISCHARGE
	The Court requested the clearance of the cut-down overhanging branches which is now a pile of brash stacked up between SSE's substation at Hincheslea and the disused railway line.	Action MSt
2014/7191	OLD CONCRETE POSTS	DISCHARGE
	The Official Verderer suggested that the old, and now very dangerous, concrete posts with steel reinforcing rods which were left all along the disused railway line when it was abandoned by the Railway company in the 1960s should be removed. This could be done as a further HLS legacy project, complementary to earlier works, where similar posts further along the disused railway line between Holmsley and Bisterne Common were removed.	Action HLS
2014/7192	OLD POUND AT HINCHESLEA	DISCHARGE
	The remnants of the old pound are dangerous. The Clerk said she will speak to the Head Agister about arranging its removal.	Action Clerk
2014/7193	LAND AT SANDY DOWN (see 2014/7161 above)	RESUME
	Mr Street said he will investigate the status of this land. It is believed it may have been subject to a land exchange which would mean common rights were extinguished. It is also thought to be SSSI.	Action MSt
2014/7194	GATE IN THE FENCE AT CADNAM	DISCHARGE
	The new gate that has been constructed in the Cadnam roundabout fenceline is not considered to be of a design that will prevent stock from getting onto the road. The Clerk will take this up with Hampshire County Highways.	Action Clerk
2014/7195	BURLEY WARTIME RUBBISH DUMP	DISCHARGE
	A large quantity of turf has been dumped at the site of the old Burley rubbish dump. The dump is no longer in use and was last used during the war. Mr Street said he will investigate and reported that in addition, there are subsidence problems at the site which has resulted in materials including metal coming to the surface.	Action Mst
	There is also a litter problem in the area, thought to be from the golf course.	
2014/7196	COACH HILL LANE	DISCHARGE
	A large horsebox is being parked on the Open Forest outside a property in Coach Hill Lane, Burley. Mr Street said he will investigate.	Action MSt
2014/7197	CONTROLLED BURNING	DISCHARGE
	In answer to a request for the burning season to be extended, the Deputy Surveyor explained that the duration of the season is dependent on weather conditions and protected species, not solely date. This was accepted by the Court which was grateful for the work which is currently underway.	

2014/7198	VEGETATION CLEARANCE	DISCHARGE
	<p>The clearance of vegetation from the tumuli between Stoneyford and the Forest boundary was felt to be rather excessive. In addition, the brash was not cleared up although the area has now been dealt with. The Deputy Surveyor advised that the Volunteer Rangers had undertaken the clearance work, but they were instructed not to burn the brash.</p>	
2014/7199	FIREWOOD	DISCHARGE
	<p>Mr Mills requested further information regarding how people can obtain firewood from the Forestry Commission. In reply, the Deputy Surveyor explained the system as respects purchase of cut wood, individual trees and large parcels. He added that the e-sales site is available to all.</p>	
2014/7200	ESSO PIPELINE AT DIBDEN – CATHODIC PROTECTION	DISCHARGE
	<p>Mr Readhead reported that he and the Estates Keeper, Mr Graham Wilson, had met and agreed with Esso that one of the digs could be moved because of poor ground conditions at the original site. The new site has better access along gravel tracks.</p>	
2014/7201	CYCLING ON THE FOREST AT NIGHT	DISCHARGE
	<p>Once more cyclists are crossing the Open Forest at night in the Hilltop Area. The Deputy Surveyor said he will raise the matter with the local Keeper.</p>	Action DS
2014/7202	ISSUES AT LATCHMOOR, BROCKENHURST	DISCHARGE
	<p>A number of issues have been identified in this area.</p> <p>The fencing at the end of the narrow tunnel under the railway line at Latchmoor, Brockenhurst, has been taken down and the rails left, nails upwards, on the Open Forest. The site manager said that he would have the nails removed.</p> <p>In addition damage has been caused, possibly by Hampshire County Highways contractors as a result of work to alleviate flooding problems around the smaller of the two bridges. The whole area appears to have been dug up and the reinstatement is not good.</p> <p>Where a cable has been exposed, SSE has in-filled the area with material that may not be approved by Natural England.</p> <p>Cyclists have caused considerable damage to grazing by cycling over the forest around the railway bridge which is temporarily closed off for repair work, along the railway fenceline down to the gravel track.</p> <p>Mr Street said he will deal with all these issues.</p>	Action MSt

2014/7203 HAMPTON RIDGE – SUBMARINE PENS DISCHARGE

As part of a WW2 project being run by the National Park Authority, the buried target has been cleared of gorse to enable mapping of underground structures, possibly followed by conservation of archaeological features. However, it is felt that in this case, denuding the mound of most of the vegetation is detrimental to the landscape and has resulted in the area being less visually attractive.

The Deputy Surveyor and Mr Street left the meeting

OTHER MATTERS ARISING

2014/7204 BOVINE TB CONTROL IN THE FOREST RESUME

The paper was approved. The Clerk was asked to copy it to Mr Graham Ferris, Chairman of the CDA. Action Clerk

The paper will now be submitted to Defra.

2014/7205 NEW FOREST SHOW DISCHARGE

The Clerk reported that work on the new show stand is progressing well.

2014/7206 HIGHWAY FENCING AND LIABILITY DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer reported that he has written a strong letter to the Highways Agency concerning the A31 fence.

2014/7207 HOT BRANDING DISCHARGE

Mr Readhead will take over from Mrs Thorne who had kindly continued to represent the Verderers at meetings concerning hot branding, despite her term as a Verderer coming to an end last summer.

A meeting to review the Code of Practice is scheduled to take place on Saturday 22nd March in Minehead. Mr Readhead will attend.

2014/7208 REVIEW OF HIT & RUN REWARD SCHEME RULES DISCHARGE

The Clerk asked the Court to review the scheme rules as she felt that insisting someone comes to the Open Court to receive his or her reward is a disincentive. It was also agreed that in future commoners may apply for the reward, but not the owner of the animal involved in the accident. The rules are being amended. Action Clerk

2014/7209 REPAIRING THE ROADS DISCHARGE

Mr Readhead reported that he has recently watched a demonstration of a new method of filling pot-holes. He felt the method is acceptable and should be permitted in the Forest providing the safeguards that were employed to protect the verges during the demonstration are always adhered to. In addition, the Court requires the crew who undertook the demonstration, to do the work in the Forest. An inspection of repairs carried out on the Forest will be undertaken in due course. The Clerk will advise Hampshire County Highways. Action Clerk

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2014/7210 HAMPTWORTH ESTATE BOUNDARY DISCHARGE

It is understood that portions of the Hamptworth Estate may have been sold. It was decided that the Agisters cannot keep fetching stock which has got into the estate, because it is the land owner's responsibility to fence his land to keep the depastured stock out.

2014/7211 LEADER PROGRAMME MEETING RESUME

Mr Deakin is attending as a representative of the CDA and he agreed to report back to the Court.

Action
RD

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME (HLS)

2014/7212 AGM RESUME

The AGM is on Thursday 27th March at 5.30 p.m. in the Verderers' Hall. All are welcome and the Official Verderer asked anyone who wishes to bring guests to let Colin Draper know so that he can advise the caterers of the numbers expected. It is hoped as many as possible will attend.

VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME (VGS)

2014/7213 PAYMENTS DISCHARGE

Commoners should have received their payments on 5th March by electronic bank transfer.

Statements have been sent by post and should be arriving now.

MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

2014/7214 NEW FOREST CONSULATIVE PANEL DISCHARGE

Clive Chatters is the new chairman.

The development of agricultural buildings within National Parks will continue to require planning permission and this was welcomed.

Other items of interest included a planned survey of what local businesses want, an animal casualty display and how to encourage the 'Womble' effect (furry litter pickers) in the Forest.

2014/7215 SYCAMORE TREES DISCHARGE

Miss Macnair expressed concern at the danger to stock posed by overhanging sycamore trees, as sycamore can be toxic to ponies, but it was felt it is not possible to insist that property owners keep them cut back.

2014/7216 TRANQUILITY MAPPING RESUME

Mr Dowsett reported that Land Use Consultants have prepared a new tranquillity map of the Forest, which now only requires fine tuning. The final version is scheduled for submission in early April.

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FINANCIAL MATTERS

2014/7217 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR FEBRUARY 2014 RESUME

The financial statement was noted.

STAFF MATTERS

2014/7218 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STAFF COMMITTEE MINUTES DISCHARGE

The minutes mention a stock trailer when it should say mobile pound trailer.

The Pylewell Estate Agent was contacted about the condition of the fence and promised to get it dealt with.

The meeting of Jack Donkey owners will be arranged after the Stallion Sub-Committee meeting.

The penalty under the VGS imposed on the commoner who fed in the wrong place was felt by the Staff Committee to be overly harsh.

HEALTH & SAFETY & TRAINING

There were no health and safety or training issues to report or discuss.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2014/7219 NEW FOREST (RIVERS) CATCHMENT PROJECT – BEAULIEU AND LYMINGTON RIVERS DISCHARGE

Mrs Westerhoff said that she has received some comments from Verderers, but in the absence of any further comments, she would like to submit the paper to the New Forest Land Advice Service without further delay. The Court was happy for her to go ahead.

Action
DW

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 13:13 hrs.