

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday, 17th September 2003 at 9.30 a.m. in the Library, The Queen's House, Lyndhurst.

PRESENT: Mr O Crosthwaite Eyre Official Verderer
Mr J Adams Elected Verderer & Chairman of the Staff Committee
Mr P Frost Countryside Agency Appointed Verderer
Mr A Gerrelli Elected Verderer
Mrs K Heron Appointed Hampshire County Council Verderer
Mr J F Kitcher Elected Verderer
Miss D Macnair Elected Verderer
The Hon R Montagu Appointed Forestry Commission Verderer
Mr A H Pasmore Elected Verderer
Mrs P Thorne Appointed DEFRA Verderer

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss S Westwood Clerk
Mr B Ingram Head Agister (first three items only)

APOLOGIES: None

IN COMMITTEE

The Official Verderer welcomed Mrs Pat Thorne and the Hon Ralph Montagu to the Court.

2003/375 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING DISCHARGE

The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 16th July 2003 were approved and signed.

2003/376 ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS DISCHARGE

The Announcements and Decisions were approved.

2003/377 CONDITION OF STOCK RESUME

Stock looks very well. The cattle look exceptionally well. The drifts commenced in August. They are not going as well as usual as the ponies seem to be spread out. Various reasons have been suggested including the lack of stallions. Generally it is considered there is little to worry about. One or two mares have been removed. A small problem arose at the Burley drift where a mare came in that was not bad enough to remove but will undoubtedly deteriorate. The owner did not want to take her and the pony will have to be watched carefully as winter approaches. This particular commoner will not catch his own stock and relies on other people. When the time comes an order will be issued in respect of this pony.

The very dry weather continues and rain is now badly needed if conditions on the Forest are to remain good.

A gentleman is attending the drifts taking photographs, apparently for his own portfolio.

2003/378 STRANGLES RESUME

There is an outbreak of strangles at East End which is affecting animals on private property. The drift which was due to be held there on Sunday will be postponed and the Furzey Lodge drift brought forward.

- 2003/379 WORMING RESUME
- The Clerk reported that things are progressing slowly. Christine Stewart is continuing with her literature study with limited financial assistance from English Nature. The contact at Fort Dodge, the company which produces the wormer "Equest" has unfortunately left and his successor is not as helpful. Mr Ralph Ellis (Veterinary Surgeon) continues to pursue this line of enquiry in the hope that more co-operation might be forthcoming from the company.
- 2003/380 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME
- The Official Verderer declared an interest the Golf Club as the matter appears later in the agenda.
- Mrs Heron declared an interest in the County Council's proposals for work on the Broomy Plain Road.
- 2003/381 FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME
- The financial statements in respect of July and August were approved.
- In response to the Clerk's request for clarification, it was confirmed the legal fees in respect of the Employment Law advice will not be covered by the Railway fund.
- 2003/382 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT RESUME
- The Official Verderer reported that there are no new problems. No notices for breaches of the byelaws have been served since the last Court.
- 2003/383 PANNAGE DISCHARGE
- The proposed dates for the pannage season were approved. The Deputy Surveyor will make the usual announcement in Open Court.
- 2003/384 NON PAYMENT OF MARKING FEES RESUME
- The appeal hearing will be held at the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand, London, on 20th October 2003 before a High Court Judge. Judgement should be passed on the day.
- 2003/385 REVIEW OF THE VERDERERS' BYELAWS RESUME
- The amended byelaws were formally approved and an announcement will be made in Open Court in this connection.
- 2003/386 ANNUAL DONATION / LAND AT IBSLEY RESUME
- Mr Adams has been in touch with the Gravel Company's Land Agent. However, to date he has not been able to agree a mutually convenient date for a site visit. Later in the meeting Mrs Heron suggested that access could be authorised by the Manager of the local quarry and it was agreed therefore that provided no problems arise, a meeting will take place on the 30th September at 11.00 a.m. Those attending will meet at Mrs Heron's house.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mike Seddon Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest
APOLOGIES: Mr Will Parke Area Land Agent (New Forest)

ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

2003/387 BYELAWS

The Verderers' Byelaws have been altered and formally passed in Committee this morning, and in accordance with Section 25 of the 1877 New Forest Act (as amended by Section 9(5) New Forest Act 1949) we shall be placing notices forthwith in the local newspapers stating our intention to apply in no earlier than one month's time to the relevant Minister at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for confirmation of the Byelaws.

In the meantime the new Byelaws can be viewed on the Verderers' web site.

2003/388 AUDITED ACCOUNTS

The audited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2003 have now been produced, approved and signed. Bound copies are currently being prepared by the Auditors and they will as usual be available for inspection at the Verderers' Office.

2003/389 VERDERERS' ELECTIONS

The date for the election of three Verderers has been set for 28th November 2003, and I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all those who are entitled to vote to once again cast their ballot and continue the Forest's strong tradition of a high turnout at elections.

2003/390 HEAD AGISTER

As mentioned at the last Court, the Head Agister will be retiring at the end of October, and interviews recently took place in order to select a replacement. I am pleased to announce that the position has been offered to, and accepted by, Agister Jonathan Gerrelli, and he will be taking over from Brian Ingram on November 1st.

Jonathan Gerrelli's Appointment will obviously create a vacancy, and accordingly we are currently advertising for a fifth Agister. All those who are interested in the position are encouraged to apply. Interviews will take place in early October.

2003/391 SMILER OF SHEEPWASH

At the last Court we were asked to write to the Police to ascertain why they were not looking more closely at the circumstances surrounding the road traffic accident in which Smiler and a mare were killed. Our Clerk duly wrote to the Police who responded saying that a decision had not yet been made as to whether to prosecute and they were, therefore, unable to comment further. A further letter was sent last week asking for an update.

2003/392 LIFE 3 – HIGHLAND WATER RESTORATION PROPOSALS

The Court shares commoners' concerns over the proposals for certain works under LIFE 3. As a result, the LIFE Partners have been requested to give a Presentation to the Court in the next few weeks so as to ensure that everyone understands the procedures that must be followed before works on, or indeed effecting, the Open Forest commence.

Two Verderers sit on the Water Basin Forum which has been set up to discuss the management of watercourses in the Forest and they will report back to the Court as necessary.

2003/393 STALLION INSPECTIONS

Following various concerns expressed by the Commoners' Defence Association a review of the Stallion Selection Scheme rules is taking place.

2003/394 DANGEROUS POSTS AT EXBURY

We are pleased to announce that a very helpful letter has been received from Exbury Estate stating that whilst there remains no definitive plan as to ownership, in the interests of health and safety, the Estate has removed the leaning posts and the better ones have been painted and cleared of undergrowth. We are grateful to the Estate for carrying out this work.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2003/387 ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR JULY & AUGUST 2003

Total Accidents for the Period: 25* 34 *2 ponies killed in one RTA in July

	Killed		Collar		Injured		Collar		Uninjured		Collar		Not Found	
Ponies	16	(22)	0	(1)	2	(2)	0	(0)	0	(3)	0	(0)	2	(5)
Cattle	2	(0)	N/a	N/a	2	(1)	N/a	N/a	0	(1)	N/a	N/a	1	(1)
Donkeys	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Pigs	1	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)
Sheep	0	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)
Totals	19	(22)	0	(1)	4	(3)	0	(0)	0	(4)	0	(0)	3	(6)

TOTAL KILLED & INJURED	23	(25)
Accidents During the Hours of Darkness	6	(9)
Vehicles Involved		
Private Cars / Light Commercials	18	(24)
Motor Cycles	0	(0)
Heavy Vehicles	0	(0)
Bicycles	0	(1)
Number of Local Motorists	12	(15)
Number of Accidents Not Reported	7	(9)
Total Killed and Injured for the Year to date	63	(61)
Number of Deer Killed	5	(16)

Figures in brackets () show previous year's totals.

PRESENTMENTS BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR OF THE NEW FOREST

2003/388 PANNAGE SEASON

In accordance with the provisions of Section 7 of the New Forest Act 1964, the Verderers have been consulted with regard to the dates of the pannage season and I hereby notify the Court that the season will commence on Wednesday 10 September 2003 and that it will end on Saturday 15 November 2002, both dates inclusive.

May I remind Commoners who hold the right of Common of Mast that:-

1. Pigs turned out must be levant and couchant in and upon the land from which the right is derived.
2. Pigs may not be turned out until they have been inspected by an Agister, effectively ringed, marked and the appropriate fee paid. This must take place during normal working hours. 48 hours notice must be given and the time and place where the pigs are to be inspected and marked must be agreed.
3. Pigs must be marked before they are put onto the Forest.
4. Pigs may not be turned out into the Inclosures.
5. Breeding sows, that is female pigs in-pig, may be allowed the privilege of remaining on the Open Forest after the end of the pannage season if so authorised in writing by the Deputy Surveyor for the period specified in the consent.
6. Any breeding sow that is granted the specific written consent of exercising the privilege must be inspected, ringed, marked and paid for during the pannage season.
7. Any breeding sow exercising this privilege must return to the holding at night.
8. Apart from the aforementioned privilege of turning out breeding sows with proper authorisation onto the Open Forest beyond the pannage season, no pig will be allowed to remain on the Forest after the end of the season.
9. No period of grace is allowed for the removal of such unauthorised pigs.
10. Any consent granted for the exercise of the privilege is limited to the period following this particular pannage season and cannot be presumed to apply for future years, for which a separate application must be made.
11. Any unmarked animal running on the Forest does so in contravention of the Verderers' Byelaws and the owner is liable to a fine of up to £200.00.
12. Property owners of land adjacent to the Forest are reminded that it is their responsibility to fence out Forest animals from their land.

2003/389 WELCOME TO NEWLY APPOINTED VERDERERS

On behalf of all the Verderers, the Official Verderer welcomed the new Forestry Commission Verderer, Mr Ralph Montagu and Mrs Patricia Thorne who has been appointed by DEFRA.

PRESENTMENTS

2003/390 LIFE 3
Presentment by Mr Bob Cooper, Minstead Manor Commoner

Mr Cooper noted and welcomed the Court's interest in this project. He said the Environment Agency should publish an Environmental Statement. Mr Cooper also expressed concern that the EA seems to think it can use the Forest as a sponge to alleviate flooding where building has taken place on flood plains.

The Official Verderer advised Mr Cooper that the Court will shortly receive a Presentation from the LIFE partners.

2003/391 MANAGEMENT TRAINING
Presentment by Mr Bob Cooper – Minstead Manor Commoner

Mr Cooper asked that the Forestry Commission check more closely to ensure that these licenced activities are not damaging to the Forest. It appears that a recent "Bonding Course" included the use of piece of equipment which caused damage to paths and grassland.

2003/392 NEW PARK CAMPSITE
Presentment by Mr Mike Eccles on behalf of the Commoners' Defence Association

"New Park campsite has been an ever increasing source of worry because of the type of campers that seem to be attracted to it. Whilst this is of no direct concern to our Association, the impact on the surrounding areas of Open Forest is becoming apparent. If anybody is unfortunate enough to walk close to the edge of the farm, some areas are virtually an open sewer and there have been reports of quad bikes and trap racing on Black Knowl. On past occasions, stock has galloped through the village having obviously been disturbed by these people and for any commoner with stock close to foaling or calving, there must be huge concern that harm will come to these animals or their offspring, any intervention by local people leads to verbal or physical threats. What was once a peaceful area of Forest is now at times a no go area. The Association finds this state of affairs totally unacceptable and as such ask the Verderers to make the strongest representation to ensure that this inappropriate and undesirable situation ceases immediately".

2003/393 CAMPING & CARAVANNING ON THE OPEN FOREST
Presentment by Mr Mike Eccles on behalf of the Commoners' Defence Association

"The NFDCA is concerned regarding the recent noticeable increase in camping and caravanning on the Open Forest and in Forest car parks. Often when driving home at night during the holiday period, the inevitable flickering TV screen can be seen in roadside car parks and laybys and indeed recent sightings in Ridley Wood and on Longslade enforce our concerns. We feel that there should be increased patrolling to keep this minority element under proper control and in the official sites before, like one or two other activities, this practice gets out of hand".

2003/394 LIFE 3
Presentment by Mrs Annie Cooper, Minstead Manor Commoner

Minstead Parish Council objected to the lack of an Environmental Statement and would also like to know exactly what is going on. The Environment Agency say cattle won't drown on the Forest but of course they do get stuck in bogs in the Spring and die.

I would also like to support the CDA about illegal camping, having seen campers in Andrew's Mare and Hazel Wood.

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2003/395 BROOMY PLAIN ROAD

The Official Verderer welcomed Mr Tim Lawton, Assistant Engineer Hampshire Highways and Mr Mike Seed, Design Engineer for the Broomy Plain Road scheme to the Court.

Mr Lawton and Mr Seed had been invited to the meeting to give a short presentation on the proposals for re-haunching the road.

The Court heard that the road has deteriorated to the point that work is urgently needed to ensure the safety of motorists.

The propose scheme has two main objectives. The first being reduction in maintenance costs and secondly, effective traffic management.

Various options for the haunching were discussed including gravel only, gravel with concrete and grass cell blocks. Gravel alone creates a constant maintenance worry. Gravel with concrete is messy and looks tatty.

The preferred option is grass cell blocks which it was claimed are effective and low maintenance and theoretically reduce traffic speeds as they serve as rumble strips. The work will cover the stretch of road from the junction at Milkham Inclosure east gate to Roe Corner.

The proposal is to construct the haunch with grass cell blocks and bank up soil behind them which will be seeded. It is proposed this work be carried out during the winter. Next summer the whole road will be surface dressed. White lines could be painted along both sides if deemed necessary.

The Verderers expressed concern that the work will result in vehicles travelling at greater speeds than at present resulting in an increased risk of animal accidents. It was also suggested that the blocks could increase noise pollution from vehicles travelled over them in what is designated as a "quiet area". It was, however, argued that the noise is more apparent to the occupants of the vehicles than people or animals on the Forest.

Mr Lawton and Mr Seed then left the meeting.

The Verderers gave very careful consideration to the proposals and after further discussion the Official Verderer proposed the scheme be accepted on the understanding that the soil be banked up as high as the Authority's budget allows and the white lines be added. This was seconded by Mr Frost. 6 Verderers voted in favour of the scheme, 3 voted against and Mrs Heron abstained because of her connection with Hampshire County Council.

The Clerk will advise the Highway Authority of the Court's decision.

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2003/396 LIFE 3

RESUME

The Environment Agency's decision not to carry out an Environmental Assessment is reportedly the subject of an appeal to the Minister.

The Court will be consulted on individual proposals and representatives of the Court will be welcome on the Water Basin Forum.

2003/397 MANAGEMENT TRAINING DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor reported that these exercises are usually involve non intrusive activities. Quite specific permissions are given. However, in the case of the exercise to which Mr Cooper referred it is clear the participants over-stepped the mark. The Forestry Commission's Keeper went on site and the damaging activity ceased forthwith. There is no lasting harm to the Forest but it was agreed gave justified cause for concern.

2003/398 NEW PARK CAMPSITE RESUME

The site has unfortunately been the subject of complaints for some time. The Forestry Commission has made it clear to its tenant that travellers are not allowed. The tenant has agreed. He has also been asked to clear up the mess.

2003/399 CAMPING & CARAVANING ON THE OPEN FOREST DISCHARGE

The Forestry Commission agreed people have been camping on the Open Forest which is of course a breach of the byelaws. The Deputy Surveyor will reiterate the message to the Keepers that they need to keep up the pressure on illegal camping. Campsite occupancy has been very high this season. The campsites were full for most of August and people who turn up without pre-booking may choose to stop elsewhere. The Bank Holiday weekend was especially busy. The Keepers have some discretion as to when they move people on. In the case of a family with young children which has been discovered late in the evening, the Keeper may allow them to stay provided they move on first thing in the morning. Byelaw warning notices are occasionally issued to persistent offenders.

SUBMISSIONS BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2003/400 BRAMSHAW TELEGRAPH ROAD SIGNING RESUME

The Court did not like the design of the larger signs which have been proposed for the Bramshaw Telegraph junction. Apart from the possibly excessive number of signs, it was felt the addition of the logo made them unnecessarily large. The preference is for smaller, traditionally designed signs (finger-posts). It was agreed a formulated approach in respect of signs in the Forest should be agreed and a policy drawn up. In the meantime, the Forestry Commission will ask the Highway Authority to explain the reasons for the number and size of the signs proposed for the junction.

2003/401 FORESTRY COMMISSION CAMPSITES RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor explained that the proposals at Hollands Wood and Roundhill will require an environmental impact assessment as part of the planning process. In order to carry this out, it is necessary to define those issues that will need to be assessed and this is done through a Draft Scoping Report. This Report does not include any proposals for the two sites but deals only with the issues involved.

The Report has been sent to New Forest District Council who will in turn consult with certain statutory bodies. However, we are keen to ensure that other parties who have an interest in this process, such as

the Verderers, are informed about it and invited to comment.

The Official Verderer will draft a suitable response to the Forestry Commission which will be circulated to members of the Court for comment. The Forestry Commission requires a response by Friday 26th September if possible.

2003/402 WAGON RIDES DISCHARGE

Annual Permission was issued last year for horse drawn wagon rides which operated in a satisfactory manner in the Burley and Brockenhurst areas. A further permission was issued for wagon rides in the Lyndhurst area but the licensee did not operate on that route. The Court is now being asked to grant approval for two years for the routes. After some discussion it was agreed that the Burley and Brockenhurst operator(s) should be granted approval for two years but the permission for the Lyndhurst route will only be for one year.

2003/403 ICE CREAM SALES DISCHARGE

The Court approved the continuation of Ice Cream sales at the locations approved for 2003. As there have been no problems, the approval this time is for two years (2004 and 2005).

2003/404 CYCLING ON THE FOREST RESUME

Following complaints received from commoners and others last year that they had not had the opportunity of commenting on the Forestry Commission's request for continuing approval for its cycle network, the Court asked that this matter be resumed in October when the Forestry Commission will make a formal presentment.

2003/405 HINCHESLEA PRIMARY SUBSTATION 11kv UNDERGROUND CABLE DISCHARGE

The proposals to bury the cable at this location was approved subject to the usual conditions and with the added proviso that the top of the small trench must be properly consolidated. It is hoped that if the work proves successful, other overhead cables in the Forest may eventually be put underground.

2003/406 WINTER CAR PARK CLOSURES DISCHARGE

The Forestry Commission will be closing 31 car parks from the end of October until Easter. It is understood the amount of parking demand reduces during winter and closing the car parks will reduce maintenance costs. A map and list was provided to the Court showing the car parks that will be affected. Some concern was expressed about a possible increase in verge parking which could prove to be hazardous to stock and damaging to the fabric of the Forest. The Forestry Commission, however, gave assurance that the situation will be monitored carefully and members of the Court were asked to let Mr Harry Oram know if they notice any problems.

2003/407 LYNDHURST SEWAGE SCHEME

DISCHARGE

The final length of the Lyndhurst Sewage Scheme that runs from the main pumping station near the Lyndhurst Golf Course to the Dunces Arch Sewage Works is suffering leaks. The ductile iron pipe which is now corroded in several places needs to be replaced and Southern Water wish to lay a new pipe close to and parallel to the existing sewer for a length of approximately 100 to 120 metres. The working area will need to be fenced during the course of the works which are likely to take 2 working weeks. A temporary site compound will be established on the gravelled area to the right of the Golf Club entrance as one goes in. The Verderers approved the works, subject to the usual conditions.

2003/408 ELLINGHAM SPORTS CLUB

DISCHARGE

The request by Ellingham Sports Club to extend its pavilion to provide an additional store was approved (somewhat reluctantly) on the condition that all the clutter which will fit into the new store and which is currently left on the Open Forest is in future kept inside the store. There have been continuing problems with rubbish left on the Open Forest adjacent to the pavilion.

2003/409 LITTLE HAYES, ROMSEY ROAD, LYNDHURST

RESUME

The Court expressed concern at the precedent which would undoubtedly be set if permission was given for the occupier of this property to acquire the small piece of land outside his property in order to construct a garage. The land, which is part of the A35 verge transferred by the Forestry Commission to Hampshire County Council in 1980, may only be used for "highway purposes" and as such a Deed of Release from the covenant would be required in order that the land may be sold free of encumbrances. As the Verderers were involved in 1980, the Forestry Commission felt they should be involved now, particularly with regard to any consideration that may now be payable.

Members of the Court felt they could not make a quick decision on this matter and the Clerk was asked to write to the Parish Council seeking its views. Mr Frost also agreed to speak with Mr John Ward of New Forest District Council.

2003/410 GAS MAIN – IPERS BRIDGE

DISCHARGE

Transco have found it necessary to carry out work to the surface of the land covering the two gas mains that run from Hardley to Langley at Ipers Bridge Farm. At present the wet flush/spring line on the hillside on the Open Forest is causing the land to slump westwards onto the adjoining private land.

Certain works are needed to resolve the problems including drainage and a ditch. A temporary fence will also be needed for approximately two years to allow the ground to stabilise.

The Court gave approval for the works subject to the usual conditions regarding reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

2003/411 PROPOSAL FOR CHRISTMAS TREE SALES POINT DISCHARGE

The Court approved the Forestry Commission's proposal for a Christmas Tree sales point in December on Ashurst Campsite but stipulated that the items for sale be restricted to traditional Christmas goods such as firewood, holly wreaths and of course Christmas Trees!

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COURTS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2003/412 DOGS DISCHARGE

The Clerk confirmed that the New Forest Dog Group will add the Verderers' logo to their leaflet promoting the Dog Owners Code. However, this will not be done for a while as the Group still has a large stock of the leaflets which were printed prior to the Court offering its support.

2003/413 ORIENTEERING RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor thanked the Verderers for their advice in connection with orienteering in the Forest. He confirmed the advice will be taken into consideration when he meets with the Orienteering organisations. The Deputy Surveyor will be sending a response to the Verderers with respect to their advice.

2003/414 LONGDOWN TIP DISCHARGE

Following legal advice, the Forestry Commission has filled in the hole that appeared at the old tip site. The protective fencing has been removed and the site will be carefully monitored for further signs of subsidence.

2003/415 PICKET POST JUNCTION RESUME

Legal advice in connection with the proposed ornamental inclosure is awaited but it was reported that English Nature is not happy with the proposals.

2003/416 BEECHWOOD ROAD LOG STORE RESUME

The Forestry Commission has not yet succeeded in securing the removal of the illegal log store.

January
2004

2003/417 HOLMSLEY GRAVEL PIT RESUME

The Forestry Commission is awaiting a meeting with Hampshire County Minerals Planner. The matter will be resumed at the next Court.

2003/418 NEW FOREST GOLF COURSE DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor reported that the Forestry Commission has been advised by the Legal Department to take heed of the Verderers decision with respect to the length of the licence for the Golf Club. Provided the terms of the existing licence conditions are met, the Commission's present intention is to issue a new lease of 10 years at the expiry of the current one in 2008. The matter will be raised again

with the Verderers at that time.

Unfortunately a letter of complaint has recently been received concerning grass cuttings left by the Club on the Open Forest. The Forestry Commission will take this up with the proprietor.

See also Minute No. 2003/424 below.

2003/419 PICKET POST FENCE RESUME

The problem with the fence was raised at the New Forest Consultative Panel. It was reported that the Daily Echo (Southampton) is interested in the story. Hampshire County Council's representative also took an interest and it seems that the County may repair the fence and seek to recover the costs at a later date. Mrs Heron undertook to obtain further information.

2003/420 BUSKETTS CAR PARK DISCHARGE

The car park is expanding as a result of the deterioration of the surrounding bank and ditches and the Forestry Commission was asked to address the problem.

2003/421 GALVANISED TIN SHEETS ON THE FOREST AND COMMONS RESUME

It has been reported that sheets of galvanised tin have been placed at certain sites on the Open Forest to aid the monitoring of reptile populations. The sheets are considered to be quite hazardous for both stock and horse riders. The sheets are slippery and in some cases have sharp edges and the Forestry Commission was asked whether they could be removed. The Deputy Surveyor said that the Chief Keeper, Mr Martin Noble, is drafting a review and policy statement on how to monitor reptiles and will seek an alternative to the tin sheets. The Clerk was asked to write to the National Trust and County Council about the sheets that are on their land.

2003/422 PITMORE LANE GAS PIPE VENTS DISCHARGE

It was reported that the gorse around the gas pipe vents has grown to the extent that it may present a fire hazard. The Forestry Commission was asked to ensure it is cut back.

2003/423 C97 APPELMORE ROUNDABOUT TO IPLEY CROSSROADS DISCHARGE

It seems that the width restriction on this road have been lifted whilst a restriction on the Ipley Corner/Twiggs Lane road north of the Ipley Crossroads has been imposed thus forcing any northbound traffic onto the C97.

The Commoners' Defence Association has complained at the lack of consultation by the Highway Authority as respects this scheme.

It appears the County Council consulted the Forestry Commission and assumed that it, in turn, would consult the Verderers. On this occasion that did not happen. In future the County will ensure they consult with the Verderers direct.

The Official Verderer, Mr Peter Frost, the Deputy Surveyor and Mr Parke left the meeting.

Mr Anthony Pasmore took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COURTS

2003/424 NEW FOREST GOLF CLUB DISCHARGE

A letter has been received from the Proprietor's solicitor to which the Official Verderer had drafted a reply. The content of the reply was approved by the Court.

2003/425 PONY PASSPORTS RESUME

The Clerk reported that the Official Verderer has spoken with DEFRA which has confirmed what it expects the Court to do as respects the identification list for ponies which belong to bone-fide New Forest Commoners and remain within the Heritage Area.

The Verderers are not expected to issue any paperwork to commoners in respect of a pony recorded on the list but commoners will be able to have a copy of the identity paper.

Details of the pony must be recorded – i.e. silhouette and description completed by the owner and held by the Verderers' office.

If the pony is sick or injured and requires veterinary treatment, a vet can treat the pony but a passport must be obtained immediately afterwards and the vet will fill in details of the treatment later.

Dead ponies – those involved in RTA's or which die on the Forest from other causes will not need a passport because they cannot enter the food chain. (This applies whilst the Hunt Kennels are still able to accept fallen stock).

The Verderers retain the right to refuse to accept an incorrectly completed identity form and the owner will then be obliged to obtain a proper passport from elsewhere.

The list will not be a definitive record of all the ponies which run on the Forest but is designed to be an alternative for commoners who do not want to get passports for ponies which remain on the Forest.

The form will be put on the Verderers' website in a downloadable form to save on administration.

The application/identity form and rules will be available for approval at the next Court.

A letter has been received from the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society setting out their charges for passports and this will be circulated to all members of the Court.

2003/426 BEAULIEU ROAD HOTEL RESUME

Following the Court's approval in the July Committee that professional advice should be sought, Mr Pasmore contacted Woolley & Wallis in order to secure the services of an experienced valuer. At present a response from Woolley and Wallis is awaited.

2003/427 STALLION INSPECTIONS RESUME
November

The Clerk apologised that she has not had time to look at the Stallion Scheme and prepare a proposal for minor amendments aimed at resolving the issues surrounding the inspections this year.

2003/428 AGRI-ENVIRONMENT SCHEME RESUME

The application is progressing and at present looks promising. Hopefully an answer will be available by the next Court.

REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

2003/429 NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL DISCHARGE

Mr Jeff Kitcher agreed to act as the Court's representative on the Panel.

2003/430 THE WAY AHEAD WORKING GROUP DISCHARGE

Mr Montagu agreed to be the Court's representative on this Group.

STAFF MATTERS (including the Staff Committee)

2003/431 NEW HEAD AGISTER DISCHARGE

Agister Jonathan Gerrelli will be promoted to Head Agister on the retirement of Brian Ingram.

2003/432 JOB EVALUATIONS RESUME
November

The Clerk reported that the job evaluation meetings have taken place.

2003/433 TURF HILL POUND – DRIFT FENCING RESUME
November

The Chairman of the Staff Committee wished to know if it is acceptable to erect a length of drift fence to help guide ponies into the pound. The National Trust apparently has no objection but is not able to help. It was agreed a letter should be sent to the National Trust to confirm the proposals. Mr Adams is to assist by providing a plan of what is required.

2003/434 ADDITIONAL AGISTER RESUME

Now that Agister Gerrelli is to take Mr Ingram's place as Head Agister, it is necessary to seek another Agister to join the team. Advertisements will shortly appear in the local press and the interview date will be Friday, 10th October 2003. The interviewing panel will consist of the Official Verderer, Mr Adams, Mr Kitcher and Agister Gerrelli.

2003/435 FOAL COUNT RESUME

A report will be prepared.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

2003/436 RISK ASSESSMENTS DISCHARGE

The risk assessments for the drifts are being completed and the Agisters are ensuring helpers are made aware of specific dangers on each drift.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2003/437 DRIFTS DISCHARGE

Mr Kitcher said that it has been suggested that weekend drifts start at 8.00 a.m. in the future in order to reduce conflicts with the public and, as respects the August drifts, to avoid the heat of the day. Some reservations were expressed however, including the likelihood of less help being available and ponies not being in the required place early in the morning. It was suggested this matter be referred back to the Staff Committee for further discussions.

2003/438 DEFRA CONSULTATION ON THE PROTECTION OF RARE BREEDS IN THE EVENT OF AN OUTBREAK OF DISEASE DISCHARGE

A consultation paper has been received and anyone interested in looking at the document was asked to contact the Clerk.

2003/439 GORDLETON PLANNING APPLICATION DISCHARGE

There is some concern that the application for greenhouses at this location could result in increased heavy traffic crossing the Forest. This is an issue that the Highway Authority should consider.

2003/440 NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION POLICY ON RECREATION RESUME

The Clerk will circulate a copy of the New Forest Association's Policy paper on recreation on the Forest. Members of the Court were asked to let the office know if they objected to a letter of support being written.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 2.30 p.m.