

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 16th September 2015 at 9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.

PRESENT:	Mr Dominic May	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Mr A B Dowsett	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Mr E Heron	National Park Appointed Verderer
	Miss D Macnair MBE	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mr D Readhead	Elected Verderer
	Mr R Stride	Co-opted Verderer
	Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer
APOLOGIES	Mr A Gerrelli	Elected Verderer
	Mr G M H Mills	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2015/8119 MR EDWARD HERON – APPOINTED NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY VERDERER DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer welcomed Edward Heron to the Court. Mr Heron is the New Forest National Park Authority's appointed Verderer. He is also a Hampshire County Councillor, and a New Forest District Councillor.

2015/8120 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

A minor amendment was requested to the Minutes of the 15th July 2015. The Court agreed the amendment and authorised the Official Verderer to sign the minutes. The Clerk will ensure the amendment on Page 11 is made.

2015/8121 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

The Official Verderer, the Elected Verderers and Mr Stride all declared an interest in the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, the Verderers Grazing Scheme and Single Farm Payment/the new Basic Payment Scheme.

Miss Macnair is a member of the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society Council.

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

Mr Dowsett is a Forestry Commission Volunteer Ranger.

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

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

Mrs Westerhoff and Mr Stride are tenants of the Forestry Commission.

It was agreed that at this, his first Verderers' Court, Mr Heron will declare an interest as and when appropriate as the meeting progresses. In future, a list of his interests will be included under this heading in line with other members of the Court.

2015/8122 CONDITION OF STOCK

RESUME

The Head Agister reported that stock on the Forest is looking extremely well. He said he has never seen the pony herd looking so well. Mares with foals are inevitably not as fat as those without, but all the foals are in very good condition.

The drifts are well underway and most have been very successful.

There are still a lot of cattle on the Forest. The rain in August may have been unhelpful for the harvest but it greatly helped the growth of grass on the Forest.

The acorns are now falling. Some ponies are to be seen 'acorning'. The pigs are going out and the Agisters have marked quite a few.

Miss Macnair expressed concern that some commoners are paying for animals but are not turning them out. However, the Head Agister felt that such commoners are few and far between. If there are any concerns that commoners are not turning animals out that they are claiming for under the Verderers' Grazing Scheme, it is important that that information is passed to the Agisters so that checks can be carried out.

2015/8123 REPORT ON ANIMALS REMOVED FROM THE FOREST

RESUME

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

2015/8124 STOCK DEATHS - OTHER THAN ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

RESUME

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

2015/8125 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR

RESUME

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Forest Ponies	4658	4323
Forest Cattle	3089	2674
Forest Donkeys	107	96
Forest Pigs	0	0
Forest Sheep	0	0
Total Forest Stock	7854	7093
Common Ponies	705	723
Common Cattle	1108	1098
Common Donkeys	93	60
Common Pigs	33	23
Common Sheep	232	142
Total Common Stock	2171	2046
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	7854	7093
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	1906	1881
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	9760	8974
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	10025	9139

2015/8126 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT

RESUME

No byelaw offences have been reported.

Head Agister Jonathan Gerrelli left the meeting.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

2015/8127 HIGH SHERIFF OF HAMPSHIRE

This morning the High Sheriff of Hampshire, Lady Louisa Portal has joined us. We welcome Lady Portal to the Court. Lady Portal is the Returning Officer for our Election this year.

2015/8128 FORESTRY COMMISSION LICENSING ENCROACHMENTS

Thank you to Graham Ferris, Lindsay Stride and Brain Tarnoff for their presentments at our last Court in July, objecting to the Forestry Commission's policy of effectively selling off our beautiful New Forest by licence for its own commercial gain. The Verderers agree that this is completely unacceptable.

We have seen this now at Pipers in Burley; at Broomhills Farm in East Boldre; and at Bull Hill in Pilley. We have lost huge areas of grazing to now sterile carpets of gravel, with loss of both food for the animals, and a loss of landscape amenity, both of which the New Forest Acts empowers the Verderers to protect.

I am sorry to report that in none of these cases had Natural England been consulted before the damage was done, in direct contravention of the Habitats Regulations under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. This disgraceful policy of commercialisation of our common land has to stop, and it must stop now.

The Forestry Commission, however, seem intent to continue this lucrative income stream: only last week another was discovered by our Agisters at Wayfarers by Woods Corner. Again, this has been licensed by the Forestry Commission, for a fee of £4,000, without reference to the Verderers and without the consent of Natural England. That is illegal.

I must add that, through our Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, in which the Forestry Commission is a partner, we are spending two million pounds a year to restore the New Forest to favourable condition. Included is a verge restoration project, stopping illegal parking on the road side and restoring the grazing where overrun by cars. But we find ourselves in the absurd situation whereby the Forestry Commission is at the same time selling licenses which destroy these very areas! Bonkers.

I have recently re-read Anthony Pasmore's brilliant history of the Verderers. Each generation of Verderers finds itself in a battle that it has to win, in order to maintain the New Forest as our special place with its ancient system of pastoral farming, which creates the landscape beauty we cherish. It seems that we now have another battle to fight: this is the battle we have to win.

Gentlemen of the Forestry Commission, we are appalled.

2015/8129 STREAM RESTORATION PROJECTS

Thank you to John Fryer and Beryl Bull for their presentments about our streams restorations. We acknowledge that each project creates a disturbance in its locality, which may appear to be creating a worse environment, but I have observed in my 52 years of being here that the New Forest recovers very quickly; that our time span of what we see is actually very short compared to the nine centuries of the New Forest; we see simply a snap shot, a freeze frame.

I was a sceptic 20 years ago. But I have seen the benefits of these wetland restorations. So I am now a convert, and like all converts, I am now zealous at promoting these benefits.

- they turn the clock back to remove previous man-made interventions;
- they improve the landscape amenity of the forest;
- they encourage the re-establishment of the flood plain, depositing beneficial organic matter on the forest rather than it being washed out to sea;
- they reduce flood risk downstream;
- they improve grazing for the benefit of the grazing animals.

We strongly believe that these wetland restorations are in the best interest of the long term future of the New Forest.

2015/8130 TB CONTROL IN THE NEW FOREST

I would like to remind all commoners who are turning out cattle of the need to adhere to all the criteria within the TB Control Plan. This means that as last year, you need to arrange for your cattle to be TB tested within the period 1st October to 31st January if you are to comply with the Plan.

We have recently agreed the criteria for isolating cattle and we wrote to all cattle commoners to let them know the details. The TB Control Plan states that you must have an isolation area for cattle to be able to segregate them from your Forest herd if you want to introduce new stock, any stock that have been out of the 'control area or hard outer shell', or in case of any cattle failing a TB test.

All commoners who turned out cattle this year have been provided with a copy of the guidance drawn up by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (previously known as the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency). The guidance demonstrates the acceptable criteria for isolation pens to meet the conditions of the TB Control Plan. Individual circumstances will dictate how you implement this guidance in practice. Please contact the Verderers or APHA if you need specific advice.

I also want to take this opportunity to remind commoners that the Verderers have the authority to view movements of stock on and off your holding via the British Cattle Movement Service's Cattle Tracing System (CTS Online) and we will be carrying out spot checks on commoners' holdings to ensure they have adequate facilities for isolation should the need arise.

If anyone requires a copy of the TB Control Plan for the New Forest, or the criteria for isolating cattle, please contact our office.

2015/8131 INCREASE IN STOCK NUMBERS AND THE NEW BASIC PAYMENT SCHEME

My fellow Verderers and I are increasingly worried about the increase in the number of animals depastured. If the numbers continue to increase, we will eventually find that the Forest is overgrazed, that it cannot provide enough food for the animals, and that welfare problems may arise.

We believe that the increase in stock on the Forest in the past two years is as a result of the introduction of the new EU agricultural subsidy, the Basic Payment Scheme, which is introduced this year. For the New Forest this pays each commoner for an area of Forest which is based on the number of animals he or she depastures. We suspect that many commoners are therefore turning out more animals simply to be awarded a larger share of the forest, therefore giving the ability to claim a higher subsidy payment. This is human nature, and I do not blame anyone for doing so: if the system is so daft that it appears to reward commoners for having more animals, it is simply common sense that the commoners will turn out more animals.

The Verderers are in a dialogue with DEFRA and the RPA to have special rules for the New Forest. Both DEFRA and the RPA are receptive, and we continue our dialogue with them. It is as well to outline our options so that all commoners will understand the consequences of ever-increasing animal numbers.

Firstly we have asked DEFRA and the RPA to base 2016's payment on 2014's turnout, not 2015's. This will de-couple the subsidy payment from the number of animals. Future years would be similarly de-coupled.

We are also discussing commoners being allocated a percentage of the Forest based on the size of his or her holding. Another alternative is to allocate each commoner an equal share of the Forest, so every commoner will receive exactly the same subsidy, not based on animal numbers.

Another proposal is to pay a higher multiplier to commoners with less animals, and a lower multiplier for those with more animals.

I am asking all commoners to please be responsible in their turnout, and help us to preserve the well-being of the New Forest and its stock by avoiding the temptation to depasture animals simply to claim ever greater subsidy payments.

2015/8132 VERDERERS' ELECTION

This is my last opportunity to remind everyone of the importance of registering if they wish to vote in the forthcoming Verderers' election in November.

The Election of three Verderers this time, will be held on Friday, 27th November. The final date for registration forms to be submitted to the Verderers' Office was 1st September, however as we want to give as many people as possible the opportunity to vote, registration forms will continue to be accepted up until Friday 25th September when the Draft Electoral Register has to be finalised in time for it to be sent out to the public offices for public viewing from Friday 2nd October. The fact that you may have been registered for previous elections does not count, and therefore, to be able to vote this year, you must register now.

I hope we will see a strong turn out at the election and ask all those present to help spread the word so that as many people as possible are able to vote. I very much hope the press will also help by giving publicity to this important event.

Registration forms are available at the rear of the Court and additional copies can be provided on application to the Verderers' Office.

I would also like to take this opportunity to invite nominations for candidates to stand for election as Verderers. The deadline for the delivery of nomination papers is midday on 9th November and I will issue a reminder at the October Court – anyone requiring further information on this should contact the Verderers' Office, or the Office of the Returning Officer at the Under Sheriff's Office in Winchester.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2015/8133 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR JULY & AUGUST 2015

JULY 2015

The Agisters attended 10 accidents in July, compared to 9 accidents in July last year.

1 pony was injured and had to be destroyed, and a cow and a donkey were killed. In addition, 2 ponies were injured.

The pony which died and the cow were both wearing reflective collars.

6 accidents occurred in daylight, 1 at twilight and 3 in the dark.

9 of the vehicles involved were cars or light commercials.

5 motorists were local.

1 accident was not reported.

36 animals had been killed or injured by the end of July, compared with 33 in the same period last year.

AUGUST 2015

The Agisters attended 12 accidents in August. This compares with 10 accidents in August last year.

2 ponies were killed.

2 ponies and a cow were injured and had to be destroyed, and another cow was injured.

3 accidents occurred in daylight, 9 in the dark.

We know 3 vehicles involved were cars or light commercials and one was a motorbike. 5 accidents were not reported. We are currently lacking details for the other 3 accidents.

2 motorists are known to be local.

To the end of August, 43 animals have been killed or injured, compared with 42 in the same period last year.

THE SPEED CAMERA VAN

407 motorists were caught driving over the speed limit on the unfenced roads in July.

Unfortunately the breakdown of offences on the fenced and unfenced roads is unavailable but I can tell you that in August, 1040 drivers were caught speeding in and around the Forest.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR

2015/8134 PANNAGE

'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 formally notify the Court that the season will commence on Monday 14th September 2015 and that it will end on Thursday 12th November 2015, 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. You have been warned!

2015/8135 COMMERCIAL FUNGI PICKING IN THE NEW FOREST

'We are seeing a very real concern in the community about those who selfishly exploit fungi in the wild for commercial gain. It is the indiscriminate wholesale clearance of fungi that people find disrespectful of this special place. And, critically, it deprives many others of the enjoyment of the autumn spectacle of fungi.

There is conflicting opinion as to whether picking has a detrimental impact on the fungi. There is not yet a nationally agreed scientific view to guide our approach.

But I do believe there is widespread agreement that harvesting fungi on an unreasonable scale for commercial gain is just morally inappropriate. We should not tolerate commercial exploitation of a resource that is there for the wider shared enjoyment of the public.

Some have lobbied for a total ban on picking. To enforce a ban consistently 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with the personnel at our disposal, across an area as large as the New Forest, is just unrealistic. Unfortunately we know that a ban will simply impact on the responsible and drive those with selfish intent into even greater subterfuge.

So what can we do? If our immediate aim is to tackle commercial exploitation this season I want to use the most effective deterrent we can deploy now and get an impact quickly.

Some have suggested that a prosecution under the byelaws or the Theft Act may send a clear message. The construction of these legal regulations is not always as clear cut as one might think and, after taking advice from the Police, gathering sufficient and unambiguous evidence is not impossible but will be very challenging and demanding of time. Even if a prosecution was successful the timescales to achieve a conclusion and then broadcast it as a deterrent to others would take too long. We need a more timely, direct and harder-hitting deterrent.

In my view the prosecution of pickers fails to deter the true beneficiaries of most of the commercial exploitation – we need to hurt the people who pay the pickers, sell or buy the harvest and reap the greatest reward.

We need to achieve a message of intolerance much faster and deeper into that marketing chain. The way to do this successfully is to intercept and confiscate the harvest before it reaches the true beneficiaries – cutting the supply and eliminating the commercial reward. We will do this by taking records of vehicles and photograph individuals suspected of commercial picking and build a picture of activity and identify any patterns. When suspect vehicles are observed we will broadcast alerts amongst our staff to allow us to monitor movements. We will aim to co-ordinate staff to those locations to intercept pickers and their hoards.

Clearly, our ability to be anywhere at any time is clearly limited, but we will use the experience of our staff to target areas where we know activity has occurred in previous years combined with observations we gather this year.

We will put out clear and consistent messages that commercial picking is not tolerated. We will do this through an updated fungi picking code shown as notices at key locations around the Forest.

When we find a vehicle that we suspect is involved with commercial picking we will place a notice on the windscreen explaining that we suspect them of breaching the Theft Act and that their vehicle details have been recorded.

We believe a combination of recording details of people and vehicles, confiscating hoards and threats of prosecution will send a very rapid message to those who seek to reap the benefit.

I have discussed our options with my Keepers and drawn on their considerable expertise. I want to be very clear that the welfare of FC staff is paramount. We put our staff through training for dealing with conflict situations and they will use their experience and intuition to handle interceptions very carefully.

I see this approach being applied for this season. We will review the outcomes of this approach at the end of the season and consider how we might react next year.

I believe this approach is both achievable and realistic with the resources at our disposal but I also want your help. You can report sightings of suspected commercial picking to

our office. I have to be clear that we may not be able to respond to every report but the information will feed into a growing log of incidents that will provide a clearer picture on the true scale of the activity and inform our future approach'.

PRESENTMENTS

2015/8136 FORESTRY COMMISSION LICENCING ENCROACHMENTS –PART 2
Presentment by Dr Graham Ferris, Chairman, New Forest Commoners' Defence Association

'At the July Court, the CDA made a presentment about encroachments on the Open Forest grazing, licenced for money by the Forestry Commission. We apologise for returning to the same topic, but sadly, as the Official Verderer has reported, the examples of this inexcusable activity continue to mount up.

We spoke about the case at Bull Hill and mentioned that there were others .

The latest example referred to by the Official Verderer is a deep hoggin track, laid across a verge to a field gate near Woods Corner in Burley. This field gate has been successfully used for decades , without the need to take away another piece of Open Forest grazing.

We understand that this was licenced for cash by the Forestry Commission-WHY?

-What was the justification?

-What conditions were imposed in the licence?

-Who else was consulted?

We believe the verge may be protected by Natural England as a SSSI

We suggest it is an engineering work which may need planning permission from the National Park Authority

It has resulted in a loss of grazing and that is of great concern to both the Verderers and Commoners alike.

We are asking this Court to continue to seek assurance from the Forestry Commission that licencing of this nature will cease immediately.

And in the longer term all the relevant authorities mentioned above must agree an effective and transparent process for examining, extremely critically , any proposals which will damage the grazing on the Open Forest.'

2015/8137 BROOMY INCLOSURE RESTORATION WORKS
Presentment by Mrs Elizabeth Potter

'The reason I have come here today is to tell you about how dangerous and unsightly I find that the area round Broomy has become.

I have been riding here for about 38 years but haven't had a pony to ride for a few months so missed the works when they were going on.

What on earth has been the point of it all? Gone is the stream and its banks and its natural winding beauty and instead there is a dead infilled stone path which is unrideable. Where can the fish swim? There is nowhere and no fish. Few birds too. It is so damaged and spoiled. For the Official Verderer to say that this damage has to happen to improve things in the end is perverse. So much has been destroyed, there must be a better and less destructive way to achieve wetland restoration. It is also perverse to do work which

has disturbed so much in the bird breeding season. This is not respecting the needs of this special place, The New Forest.

It is also dangerous. We had some heavy rain a couple of weeks ago and the water appeared within the flinty stones. It was impossible to know how far into the ground my horse's feet would go. She is inexperienced but walked obediently through though sinking down. There used to be a really well built small wooden bridge which had very good footing.

Had I been galloping as one might on a drift or when hunting or when the wild ponies just feel like it, then a leg could be broken because the horse doesn't know how firm the impact with the ground will be. It is a change of impact that causes racehorses to break a leg. Jumping over a ditch is not the problem but setting up false ground as has been done here is a really dangerous and badly planned thing to do. When I tried to avoid the crossing I encountered heather bales and twine which have come to the surface already.

I talked to various people at the New Forest Show and asked them if they had seen what has been done. Several said "No". But if you haven't been there you are not in a position to say it is OK.

It is not OK. Dreadful damage has been done and much habitat seriously compromised. Go and see for yourselves.'

2015/8138 WETLAND RESTORATION IN THE NEW FOREST

Presentment by Dr David Rumble on behalf of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

'Good morning and thank you to this Court and to all present for this opportunity to respond publicly to recent discussions about wetland restoration in the Forest on behalf of the Wildlife Trust. We would argue that the proposed wetland restoration projects are, on balance, beneficial - not just from a wildlife perspective - and that there are risks of not restoring wetlands.

I don't need to remind the Court that The New Forest has Ramsar status which is a global convention on wetlands of conservation importance. As we all know it has been worked and modified by people for centuries but one of the most significant changes to the Forest's wetlands came about with the advent of heavy machinery able to cut drains, straighten and deepen streams on an unprecedented scale. The 20th Century saw some of the Forest's wetlands dry out, and others change beyond recognition. We acknowledge that during wetland restoration, sometimes fairly heavy engineering is needed but this is simply undoing the heavy engineering that has been done very recently in the history of the Forest.

The Wildlife Trust has plenty of experience of successful projects locally. One of our first was on the Dockens Water flowing through our Blashford Lakes nature reserve near Ringwood. This straightened, concrete-lined Forest stream was cut off from its floodplain and had very limited wildlife or landscape appeal. It is now transformed through de-culverting and bed-raising, and I would urge anybody to visit to see a naturally braided natural stream and wet woodland with sea trout and lamprey once again. Our biggest project was on the Itchen around Winchester where kilometres of beds were raised, banks graded, and streams re-meandered; the river was reconnected to its floodplain which sounds dramatic but has been overwhelmingly beneficial. Yes we had to get diggers in but the results were worth it: we have seen salmon snipe and lapwing return and we hope that they will breed again.

I must also mention the benefits for people. Not only is there now a thriving and sustainable wild trout fishery on these restored channels, we helped reduce the flooding of Winchester by allowing the water meadows to hold water, made possible by re-profiling banks and bed-raising. Homes and businesses flooded badly in 2000, but got off very lightly in 2014 even though there was more rainfall: a restored wetland protected the city

from flooding.

Natural wetlands are more resilient to flooding; engineered streams create bottlenecks and flash flooding downstream; restored wetlands allow surface water to go to ground and ebb and flow into the channel more gradually and predictably. Excessive drainage can dry-out peat making it oxidise into the atmosphere and become more easily eroded: the Forest's peaty soils have taken millennia to form and are being lost in a matter of years through drying and erosion. Natural wetlands have reduced flow rates and therefore reduced erosion and loss of soil and habitat. The Trust's land on the Lymington River at Roydon Woods shows that natural wetlands are compatible with grazing, forestry, a fishery, and abundant in wildlife for people to enjoy.

For these reasons we overwhelmingly support the efforts of the Forestry Commission and its partners as they seek to restore the Forest's wetland systems: yes water can be a liability when it is constrained but it is also the Forest's lifeblood and an asset when nature manages it on our behalf – ever more crucial in a changing climate.'

2015/8139 PRESENTMENT SUPPORTING CONTINUED WETLAND RESTORATION
THROUGHOUT THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK ESPECIALLY IN THE
LATCHMORE AREA
Presentment by Mr Mike Read

'Official Verderer, Verderers, Ladies and Gentlemen

My name is Mike Read. I am a professional naturalist as well as a wildlife and landscape photographer with an abiding interest in the wildlife and well-being of this fabulous New Forest National Park. I have lived in the area all of my life and have a knowledge and interest of it for over 50 years.

I read, with some dismay, the alarmist presentments made by Mr John Fryer and Mrs Beryl Bull at the July 2015 Verderers Court and felt I had, once again, to come to voice my support for the continued re-instatement of original stream courses. I will try and do so in non-emotive terms, unlike the previously mentioned presentments, which used such sensationalist and emotive language as to leave me wondering how long it is since they were journalists working for the Sun, the News of the World or some similar publication!

What many of the protestors of these wetland restoration schemes seem to overlook is that they are re-instatements of original and natural water courses. Therefore, I can only conclude that they cannot see beyond either end of their own lifetimes. Much of the straightening of the original water courses was done before they were born (perhaps!) and the benefits of the current re-instatement will mainly be seen a few years from now. Some of the earlier re-instatements are looking very good already with natural vegetation re-colonisation heading forward at a good pace. That pace is certainly much quicker than Mr Fryer predicted in his "fragile habitats of many birds, mammals, fish, insects and micro-organisms" which he says "cannot be restored". I ask the question, has Mr Fryer actually been out and looked at some of the early realignments? I certainly have and I have photographic proof of their success! Also, how many breeding birds did the protestors actually find in the areas mentioned in their presentments or have they even bothered to look?!

As far as I am concerned, the re-alignment of various water courses is being done for two main reasons:-

1. To re-instate the original, meandering, shallower stream routes which will be of great benefit to wildlife..... including right down to micro-organisms!

and

2. To hold water on the Forest for much longer, as is happening with the earlier re-instatements via less mire drainage and more meandering stream courses. This, of course, will see less flooding downstream which is vitally important in these times of climate change and more extreme weather patterns. Water held back will amount to a considerable re-wetting of many areas.

What the protestors fail to acknowledge is the huge decline over the last 2 or 3 decades, of ground nesting wetland bird species such as common snipe, common redshank and northern lapwings. These declines can be partly accounted for by a drier New Forest. Slowing down the flow of rain water from mires by re-instatement of natural water courses will potentially help these birds and many other wildlife species. Not too many people will venture into re-wetted mires so human and canine disturbance will potentially be reduced allowing for a more peaceful breeding season for these waders and other species. Also, Mrs Bull has the idea that if they are disturbed, birds will not breed. She overlooks the fact that they have the ability to move to a new area if necessary and also overlooks the fact that many species of bird will nest in close proximity to disturbance in our gardens and streets for instance.

If there was any foundation to Mr Fryer's and Mrs Bull's concerns, Natural England and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust would not be supporting the scheme (which they are).

These re-alignments are not the "environmental disaster" referred to by Mr Fryer but to use his own words I say, in relation to the protests "enough is enough". The work of re-instatement of original stream courses will, even must continue despite emotive, alarmist and at times inaccurate presentments objecting to the work.'

2015/8140 WETLAND RESTORATION
Presentment by Mrs Theresa Holden

'Official Verderer, Verderers, ladies and gentleman

My name is Theresa Holden and I am the conservation officer for the Ringwood Natural History Society. On behalf of the Society I would like to express our ongoing support for the Forestry Commission's work on stream restoration in the Forest. This includes the proposed work to restore Latchmore Brook to its natural meandering course.]

Contrary to the "ruination of the water courses", mentioned by John Fryer at the July Verderers' Court, the purpose of this work is to hold water in the upper reaches of the stream system. The result of this will be:-

1. Reduce flooding further down the Avon,
2. Better quality grazing in the valley lawns as demonstrated to you 3 years ago by Dr Syrratt, Ringwood Natural History Society conservation officer before me,
3. Protection of mire habitat.

Regarding this last point, the Forest mires are an important ecosystem supporting valuable habitats for rare plants, invertebrates and animals. The mires also provide nesting sites for birds such as lapwing and curlew and therefore it is essential that they are preserved. Any disturbance caused by the work will be temporary. Birds have a degree of resilience to limited disturbances and will adapt accordingly.

Although this work may not be aesthetically pleasing to the eye initially, habitats do recover in time. This is all part of natural succession.

We are confident that Natural England would not have given the go ahead to proceed with this work if it thought that it would have a detrimental effect on the flora and fauna of this

habitat.

Thank you for listening to my presentment.'

2015/8141 WETLAND RESTORATION

Presentment by Brian Tarnoff, New Forest Association (Chair, Habitat and Landscape Committee)

'The NFA thanks the Wildlife Trust, the Ringwood Natural History Society, and Mike Read for supporting the Wetland Restoration and also to the Official Verderer for becoming a "zealous convert" to the cause. Just one point I would like to add to those that have already been made: The Victorian Engineers who put in this drainage works did not have to do Environmental Impact Assessments they did not need to use sensitive methods of moving stream beds aside so that invertebrates and other features of the habitat could be preserved as in the restorations we have now. Those works, however bullishly done by Victorian Engineers have bounced back, and this is what many have been talking about in terms of looking further than our own lifetimes, and how these works will [eventually] bed in.

That's not to say that the Forestry Commission gets everything right. We should be after them to correct things like heather bales that have come to the surface, etc. but overall our support for river restoration continues.'

2015/8142 FUNGI

Presentment by Mr Brian Tarnoff, New Forest Association (Chair, Habitat and Landscape Committee)

'Fungi Forage –clarification and update

The NFA are seeking a very specific Epping Forest style ban on fungi foraging on the Crown Lands of the New Forest, the Site of Special Scientific Interest which is in the stewardship of the Forestry Commission. Epping Forest Keepers are empowered to seize harvests from fungi foragers and in 2013 brought twenty successful prosecutions. The NFA believe a similar regime would make it easier to deter commercial foragers who would no longer have recourse to pretend they are picking for personal use.

Wild Mushroom Picker's Code of Conduct

We are also concerned about out-dated and erroneous advice which the Forestry Commission continues to distribute about personal foraging on the New Forest. Their leaflets and website suggest that everyone may collect up to 1.5 kg of fungi per person / per day. This has absolutely no basis in law. It is derived from a misreading of The Wild Mushroom Picker's Code of Conduct Published 3rd September 1998 by English Nature developed in conjunction with Forestry Commission, the National Trust, the Woodland Trust, the Association of British Fungus Groups and the British Mycological Society.

In the section on Collecting for the pot:

Only collect from plentiful populations and take no more than you want for your personal consumption. In line with codes in most other European countries. we recommend that you pick no more than 1.5 kg per visit or no more than half of the fruit bodies of any single species present. whichever is the lower amount.

On some SSSIs, most nature reserves and other protected areas it is unlikely that culinary collecting is allowed. Always consult the site owner or manager before collecting.

In the section on Advice for Landowners & Managers

If the land is a National Nature Reserve, other nature reserve or protected area, or an [sic] SSSI it will probably be appropriate to limit picking to scientific collecting.

On SSSIs, picking fungi may require consent in writing from the statutory nature conservation body. [Natural England]

Ignoring the tentative language and the Zeno's paradox baiting "take half" suggestion. The 1.5kg limit is "per visit" which in context seems to cover a foray, but has been misapplied to mean "per person per day". This ignores the guidelines for SSSI which deems personal culinary use inappropriate and requiring consent from Natural England. The 1.5kg "allowance" applicable to unprotected habitats is irrelevant.

Natural England have admitted the code "could [be] expressed more clearly and emphatically to avoid any misinterpretation." Both of the Fungi specialist organizations originally consulted for the code have withdrawn support. The ABFG (now the Fungus Conservation Trust) characterise it as "ill conceived and unhelpful". The BMS have dropped it from their website, and now state that "a complete ban on [culinary] collection (except for scientific and educational purposes, which would require permission) should exist in the New Forest." All of the original consultees acknowledge that the rise in popularity of personal foraging and the uncontrolled growth of commercial picking require a clearer, stricter code. This is in the process of being developed, in the meantime, the Forestry Commission need to stop promoting their erroneous interpretation.

Enforcement

The Deputy Surveyor has said it's unrealistic to enforce a total ban. Traffic enforcement doesn't catch every motorist who speeds, but that doesn't stop us having speed limits. The NFA accept the limitations on enforcement, but suggest a blanket ban will assist enforcement by removing the need to prove commercial intent and weigh amounts against the discredited allowance. Whether the FC would target everyone is up to them. In practical terms this may only affect foragers who are overdoing it to the extent that they come to the notice of the Keepers regardless of commercial or personal use. Having a ban in place will allow enforcement to evolve.

The NFA ask for the Verderer's support in continuing to call for the blanket ban on culinary fungi forage on the Crown Lands. We also ask for your support for our request that the Forestry Commission remove inappropriate advice including the erroneous daily allowance from all literature and websites pertaining to fungi collection from the New Forest SSSI.

We need to send the message that the Crown Lands of the New Forest are a protected habitat and landscape. Foragers who claim to be environmentalists should respect that the Forest is different. The rules here should favour this habitat, not commercial greed or personal entitlement.'

2015/8143 FUNGI CONSERVATION
Presentment from Sara Cadbury.

'I am Sara Cadbury - local lifetime New Forest resident and mycologist.

It was very gratifying to hear from Bruce Rothnie at the Consultative Panel at the beginning of this month, that the Forestry Commission is going to take a very strong and positive approach to address the problem of commercial collecting of fungi in the New Forest.

BUT - I would like to read out the list of organisations that are wholeheartedly supporting a COMPLETE BAN ON ALL FUNGI COLLECTING in the New Forest (except for scientific and educational purposes, which would require permission).

ALL these submissions have been received in writing, along with ones from many individuals, giving their reasons for a total ban.

The list commences with -

The British Mycological Society - this is a unanimous decision by the British Mycological Society Conservation Committee, which consists of 12 top, eminent mycologists in this country. Also Professor Stefan Buczacki, double past President of the British Mycological Society, Dr Martyn Ainsworth who is Senior Researcher in Fungal Conservation at Kew, and Senior Specialist in Fungi for Natural England and BMS member, and also Professor Richard Fortey of the British Natural History Museum and author and television personality, as well as a BMS member.

The International Society for Fungus Conservation and Dr. David Minter.

The Fungus Conservation Trust

The New Forest Association

The New Forest Study Group

The Lymington and District Naturalists' Society

The Ringwood Natural History Society

The Waterside Natural History Society

All these organisations are very committed to promote fungi forays for educational purposes, but they are also committed to conserve fungi in this very important and special area.

Thank you.'

The Official thanked all those making presentments today, explaining that the information they provide, greatly helps the Verderers in their decision making.

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

APOLOGIES: Mr Paul Grugeon, Land Agent (New Forest)

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2015/8144 FUNGI

DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer thanked the Deputy Surveyor for his presentment, which it is understood he originally announced at the New Forest Consultative Panel. The Forestry Commissions proposals for controlling commercial fungi picking in the Forest are welcomed.

The Court thanked the Forestry Commission for its commitment to try to resolve the problem of excessive commercial fungi picking.

The Deputy Surveyor said that the Forestry Commission will review the outcome of this season's approach and consider if it, and future information, needs revising for next year.

2015/8145 FORESTRY COMMISSION LICENCING ENCROACHMENTS

RESUME

The Court accepts that its consent is not required for access licences.

However, it believes Section 18 (1) (a) of the 1949 New Forest Act, which permits the Forestry Commission to grant licences without reference to the Verderers, does not confer power on the Forestry Commission to grant licences to lay gravel on the Open Forest grazing. Additionally, the Act specifically states that Verderers' consent must be obtained for any parking areas.

After a detailed discussion during which members of the Court once more expressed deep concern at the increase of gravelled accesses in the Forest, it was agreed that the Forestry Commission will, as a matter of urgency, review its standard licence with a view to it being amended. The Court is of the view that in any new licence, including when an old licence is revised and re-issued, the default condition should be that no gravel should be allowed on the open Forest, and that this should be specifically stated within the licence.

The Deputy Surveyor said that Natural England's advice has already been sought on the wording of licences and he is happy to share the details with the Court once it is finalised.

A further point was made that the width of the access should also be stipulated in all licences and a properly drawn plan included.

In the case of the property in Burley, the occupier was informed by Mrs Westerhoff that Natural England must be consulted before any gravel is laid but it appears that her advice was not heeded and the work on the driveway was completed without reference to either the Forestry Commission or Natural England.

The Deputy Surveyor agreed that no new licences will be issued until the Court and Forestry Commission have reached agreement.

2015/8146 1-2 FOX COTTAGES

RESUME

A copy of the statutory declarations has been provided to the Clerk who will ensure they are passed to the Official Verderer.

There remains a difference of opinion as to whether the newly gravelled area outside the cottage is an access track or a vehicle parking area. Mr Stride produced two photographs taken by a local commoner showing it being used as for car parking.

Mr Heron suggested the Court should be provided with a copy of the Access Licence. He added that an access licence does not normally give consent for work on land outside a property's boundary. Such work would be subject to separate agreement and licencing.

3 FOX COTTAGES

The Court is still awaiting the file so that it can understand why a new licence has been issued.

2015/8147 BROOMY INCLOSURE RESTORATION WORKS DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett and Mr Stride have inspected the site of the works. The large stones have been removed from the ford which is now considered to be in an acceptable and useable condition.

2015/8148 WETLAND RESTORATION WORKS DISCHARGE

The Court was pleased to receive positive presentments supporting the wetland restoration works although it is recognised that not everyone will agree.

SUBMISSIONS BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2015/8149 RENEWAL OF THREE FIRE HYDRANTS IN BROCKENHURST DISCHARGE

The Court agreed the proposals subject to the usual three conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc., and in addition, that the new covers are the same size as the existing ones.

2015/8150 WORKS AT SWAY RESERVOIR DISCHARGE

Bournemouth Water Company is seeking consent for major works to Sway reservoir to replace the impermeable membrane due to water quality issues. A large compound area for storage of materials and welfare, and CDM facilities is required. Replacement of a water sampling kiosk also forms part of the proposals.

The court approved the proposals subject to the usual three conditions and that the old water sampling kiosk, together with the remnants of its surrounding fence is removed and the area left safe.

2015/8151 CARY'S COTTAGE, MAY LANE, PILLEY RESUME

The proposals to install a foul drainage pipe and inspection chamber were approved subject to the usual conditions. The Estates Keeper is to check which neighbour's driveway is tarmac and whether the licence permits that sort of surface.

Action
FC Estates
Keeper

2015/8152 HAWTHORN COTTAGE, NORTH WEIRS, BROCKENHURST DISCHARGE

The proposal to connect to the mains sewer was approved subject to the three usual conditions, and in addition:-

The driveway must be reinstated so as to be no wider than the width of the main driveway gate; the pedestrian gate must open onto grass and a plan must be incorporated into the licence stipulating the width of the track.

2015/8153 WATER SUPPLY TO LAND ADJACENT TO 2 NICHOLS CORNER, BARTLEY DISCHARGE

The proposal to run a water pipe under the verge from the highway, to the field was approved subject to the usual three conditions.

- | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------------|
| 2015/8154 | ROUNDHILL CAMPSITE WATER TOWER ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING CONTROL VALVES | DISCHARGE |
| | <p>Consent was requested to alter the existing underground control valves associated with the RAF water tower. An old valve will be replaced, with no net loss of grazing. Consent was given, subject to the usual three conditions.</p> | |
| 2015/8155 | SWAY CEMETERY – REQUEST FOR POST AND RAIL FENCE | DISCHARGE |
| | <p>Mr Edward Heron declared an interest in this submission as he is a New Forest District Councillor.</p> <p>The request to erect a post and rail fence which would assist with temporarily excluding stock from the access to the cemetery whilst funeral processions pass along the track was refused. The proposal to use chains to shut off each end of the track was considered to be unacceptable on the Forest as they can be extremely hazardous to stock and not particularly effective. The Court felt the fence is unnecessary and was concerned that a request to fully fence the track may follow in due course.</p> <p>The Court requested a 'Please Close the Gate' sign be added to the road gate as it is sometimes left open.</p> | |
| 2015/8156 | LYNDHURST CEMETERY TO THE BEAULIEU ROAD – ELECTRICITY AND WATER SUPPLIES | DISCHARGE |
| | <p>The proposal to provide underground electricity and water supplies to the Cemetery in order to improve security and prevent deterioration of the Victorian Chapel due to damp was approved subject to the usual three conditions. An additional condition is that there must be no exposed manhole covers on the Open Forest.</p> | |
| 2015/8157 | FLETCHERS THORNS BRIDGE | DISCHARGE |
| | <p>The bridge is not on Open Forest and therefore the Court's consent is not required. However, the Court was grateful for the opportunity to comment on the proposed new bridge. The Court expressed concern at the size of the structure which is felt will be out of keeping with the traditional character of the Forest and will have a significant adverse visual impact on the landscape amenity. The Clerk was asked to write to the Planning Authority to express the Court's concern.</p> | |
| | | Action
Clerk |
| 2015/8158 | HINCHESSLEA SUBSTATION | DISCHARGE |
| | <p>Consent was given in advance of the Court following an urgent request by SSE to lay an underground earth cable on the Open Forest between the substation compound and a pole one hundred yards to the east.</p> <p>The work was completed in one day and involved excavating a trench 0.5 metre deep and some 6 inches wide. The work was urgently required to ensure continuity of electricity supply.</p> <p>The Court was content to give retrospective consent for the work but a request was made that in future, such proposals be directed to the Clerk to the Verderers in the first instance rather than direct to an individual Verderer as happened on this occasion. The Forestry Commission agreed.</p> | |

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

2015/8159	HOLMSLEY PASSAGE	RESUME
	<p>The Clerk reported that Hampshire County Highways has quoted a cost of approximately £2,000 for the necessary consultation but has stated that no resources are available to take the proposal forward at this time.</p> <p>The Clerk said she has asked HCC not to plan repair works to the road until such time as resources are available to further the suggestion of closing the road to through traffic. The Court was in full support.</p> <p>Mr Heron said he will discuss the matter further with the local County Councillor and Hampshire County Highways. The Clerk will forward a copy of HHW's letter.</p>	Action EH / Clerk
2015/8160	VERGE EROSION RESTORATION PROJECT	RESUME
	<p>The Deputy Surveyor reported that Mr Gary North has formulated a plan for some work on the verges around East Boldre. The Parish Council has been invited to submit thoughts and ideas. A programme of works will be prepared which will flow through the HLS. The Deputy Surveyor added that input from the Court would be most welcome.</p> <p>It was pointed out that the scalplings on the open Forest outside a property at the junction of Chapel Lane have not yet been removed.</p>	Action DS Verderers DS
2015/8161	ORDNANCE AT MATLEY	DISCHARGE
	<p>The Deputy Surveyor has received the report from the MOD. He will let the Clerk have a copy. The report will be reviewed at the next Staff Committee.</p>	Action DS/RD
2015/8162	NO FOREST CYCLING SIGNS	RESUME
	<p>The Deputy Surveyor reported that the signs were ordered a month ago. They are expected to arrive very soon.</p>	
2015/8163	FALLEN TIMBER	DISCHARGE
	<p>Works has started to clear fallen timber in New Park prior to the drift. Hawkhill will be next. The principle will be carried on in other driftways.</p>	
Mr Heron gave his apologies and left the meeting.		
2015/8164	ROADSIDE TREES	RESUME
	<p>A request was made that fallen trees on the roadside be cleared back further so as to avoid animals having to walk out into the road in order to get past. A policy is required on how far back trees should be cleared. It was suggested that such work could be agreed as another prescription to apply to the whole Forest. Pennerley Gate back towards Lyndhurst is a particularly bad example of where fallen timber is too close to the road.</p> <p>A meeting will be arranged by the Deputy Surveyor which will be attended by Mr Richard Stride, Mr Mike Pittock and Mr Billy Howells. Mr Everett (FC) is shortly to leave the FC and his input is also required before he goes.</p>	Action DS

	Miss Macnair asked who had felled a tree in Pound Lane and asked why? She commented that it has been cleared off the road and left. Miss Macnair felt it should be sold for planks or gate posts as it has a straight trunk.	Action DS
2015/8165	DEMOLITION OF SWAN GREEN CRICKET PAVILION	RESUME
	The Deputy Surveyor will remind the Estates Department to submit the planning application for the pavilion's demolition.	Action DS
2015/8166	LYNDHURST ALLOTMENTS	DISCHARGE
	Mr Stride said work is in progress to resolve the problem of dogs accessing the allotments. A gravel bank is being created under the gate.	
2015/8167	LYNDHURST WAR MEMORIAL GROUND REPAIRS	DISCHARGE
	Mr Stride visited the site and suggested that soil should be used to repair the ground. The Court was happy with this simple solution.	
2015/8168	RESIDENTS PARKING AT BRITTONS COTTAGES, BROCKENHURST	DISCHARGE
	The Court advised Mr Grugeon of the Court's policy on parking and the matter is with the Ombudsman.	

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2015/8169	REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE LIST	RESUME
	The Deputy Surveyor apologised that a list has not been provided but he confirmed there are no changes.	
2015/8170	CONSULTATIVE PANEL WETLAND RESTORATION PRESENTATIONS	DISCHARGE
	The Official Verderer gave a short presentation as did the Forestry Commission and Natural England. It was agreed that it would be helpful in future to give more consideration to the order in which presentations are given.	

ENCROACHMENTS

2015/8171	ENCROACHMENTS LIST	RESUME
	An updated encroachments list was not available.	
2015/8172	OLDWELL COTTAGE	RESUME
	In the absence of Mr Grugeon, this was resumed until October.	
2015/8173	PILLEY ALLOTMENT VERGE PARKING	RESUME
	This item is also resumed.	
2015/8174	SEAT AT BERRY WOOD	RESUME
	The seat is still there.	Action DS

2015/8175	BASALT	RESUME When?
	Natural England has not yet come to a conclusion about the use of basalt in the Forest because the vegetation survey that it was agreed should be carried out, has not yet been undertaken. The Forestry Commission is now arranging for the survey to commence.	Action DS
2015/8176	TRACK AT HOME FARM BARTLEY	RESUME
	The overspill on the verge has still not been swept back onto the track	Action DS
2015/8177	CAMP HILL, EMERY DOWN	RESUME
	The garden waste, enlarged parking area and staddle stones have still not been dealt with.	Action DS
2015/8178	OFF ROAD CYCLING GPS NETWORK ROUTE FINDERS	DISCHARGE
	Mr Dowsett's discussions with the National Park Authority's Sustainable Transport Officer indicate that the GPS route finders are very successful in keeping cyclists to the waymarked cycle route. 50 have been trialled so far. They cannot be used like a Satellite Navigation Device to devise alternative routes from A to B. Mr Dowsett felt they are a very good idea.	
	Whilst on the subject of the waymarked cycle route, Mr Dowsett said that a number of markers are becoming obscured by vegetation which needs clearing back. The Court felt it is a job for the Volunteer Rangers – of which Mr Dowsett is one!	
ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION		
2015/8179	VOLUNTARY RANGERS ASSISTANCE ON DRIFTS	DISCHARGE
	The Official Verderer wished to comment on the excellent assistance provided by the Forestry Commission's Rangers at the drifts. On Sunday at the Woods Corner Drift they did a very good job of preventing members of the public from straying into the path of the ponies, some of which were very keen to escape capture.	
	Miss Macnair and Mr Stride commented that the help received at the Dur Hill Drift was also very welcome. Their assistance is invaluable as members of the public will often ignore commoners, whereas they will listen to Rangers in uniform.	
	The Deputy Surveyor said he will ensure the Court's gratitude is passed through to the Ranger team.	
2015/8180	FORESTRY COMMISSION LICENSING OF MATERIALS STORED ON THE OPEN FOREST	RESUME
	The Deputy Surveyor said a policy has not yet been drawn up but that if there is space on private property for the storage of building materials, that is where they should be and not on the Forest outside. If storage on a property is genuinely impossible, then a licence is issued with a time limit.	
	The Official Verderer said a written policy would be appreciated and asked the Deputy Surveyor if one can be produced.	Action DS

2015/8181 LONG MEADOW, NEW PARK, PROPOSED BEREAVEMENT CENTRE DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor explained that the Estates Department was approached a short while ago by two people seeking the Forestry Commission's views on their proposal to construct a building from which to operate a bereavement centre.

The Deputy Surveyor said such a development in New Park is unlikely to be appropriate. It is understood the New Forest Show Society is also not in favour, nor is the Court which in fact has a five year lease on the piece of land on which the proposers wish to build their centre.

The Deputy Surveyor will ask Mr Grugeon to write to the two individuals explaining that the development will not be approved. Action DS

2015/8182 LINWOOD ROAD HAUNCHING DISCHARGE

Mr Readhead met Mr Nigel Best from Hampshire County Highways on the 7th August. The Highway Authority's proposals for repairing the road haunches were agreed in principle. The road edges will be cut back and repaired. The road will not be widened. Mr Readhead suggested soil should be used for the repairs but members of the Court pointed out that Natural England insist that hoggin gravel is used. Hampshire County Highways has agreed to advise the Court when work starts in order that it can be inspected.

2015/8183 BURLEY ROAD PINCH POINTS DISCHARGE

A further trial is planned, with the pinch points being prioritised. Additional signage, on the pinch points, will be necessary.

The Court welcomed the removal of three pinch points but does not agree with the prioritisation which it was considered may have the effect of increasing traffic speeds. The additional signage is also not welcome but the proposed speed reduction to 30 mph is.

The Clerk will advise the County of the Court's views. Action Clerk

2015/8184 CYCLEWAY IMPROVEMENTS - A337 BROCKENHURST OUTSIDE DISCHARGE
HOLLANDS WOOD CAMPSITE ENTRANCE

The proposals to improve safety by reducing the size of the entrance to the campsite, increasing the width of the verge and installing traffic islands in the middle of the carriageway were noted. This is not a matter that requires Verderers' consent and the Court was grateful to Hampshire County Highways for the information.

2015/8185 BRAMBLE AND BRACKEN ENCROACHMENT AND MANAGEMENT DISCHARGE

Miss Macnair remarked that more grazing is being lost through encroachment by bramble and bracken than almost anything else. A discussion took place during which old methods of control were discussed. Various opinions were offered as to the best methods of controlling bramble and bracken.

The Official Verderer pointed out that bracken clearance is one of the HLS projects. The machines used on the Forest for such work broke down, so last year's programme was curtailed. The machines are now repaired and it is hoped that further clearance work will now recommence.

2015/8186	TIMBER ON COWLEYS HEATH	DISCHARGE
	Mr Deakin said he hopes the timber on the Open Forest at Cowleys will be cleared before winter. Alum Green and a lawn at Minstead also require clearing.	Action DS
2015/8187	WORKS ON BRAMSHAW GOLF CLUB'S FOREST COURSE	DISCHARGE
	Mr Readhead said the agreed works on Bramshaw Golf Course have started.	
2015/8188	NORLEY WOOD CROSSROADS	DISCHARGE
	The Clerk reported that a letter has been received seeking the Court's support for allowing vegetation to grow up around Norley Wood crossroads in order to restrict motorists' view of oncoming vehicles at the junction. The writer suggests this would reduce vehicle collisions at the location.	
	This suggestion has, however, been put forward before. Hampshire County Council has suggested allowing vegetation to increase around the junction before. However, at a meeting with HCC, attended by the Official Verderer and the Hon Ralph Montagu (FC Verderer at the time), it was made very clear that the Court could not agree. Vegetation growing near the road side is known to increase the likelihood of accidents involving commoners' stock because animals can appear from behind vegetation without warning, straight into the path of oncoming vehicles.	
	The Clerk will advise the letter writer that the Court cannot support the proposal.	Action Clerk

The Deputy Surveyor left the meeting

ENCROACHMENTS NOT INVOLVING THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2015/8189	ENCROACHMENT AT HUCKLESBROOK	DISCHARGE
	Mrs Westerhoff reported that the area where the spoil was illegally dumped is now growing over.	

OTHER MATTERS ARISING

2015/8190	SPEED CAMERA SURVEY	DISCHARGE
	The clerk circulated a copy of Jo Ivey's report on comments collected at the New Forest Show. It states that 97% of those who responded support the mobile speed camera.	
2015/8191	NATIONAL GRID PROPOSALS	RESUME
	Mrs Westerhoff and Mr Dowsett reported on the last meeting they attended concerning the undergrounding of the high voltage pylons and lines in the north of the Forest.	
	Whilst the New Forest site was originally quite low on the list, it has now been prioritised and will progress to the feasibility stage.	

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

2015/8192 NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY RECREATION DISCHARGE
MANAGEMENT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR THE NEW
FOREST

The Court accepted the final version. The NPA will be advised.

Action OV

2015/8193 CYCLING DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett advised that the route from Salisbury to the New Forest via Woodgreen and Godshill has been rejected following the local councillor's objection to the route on the grounds that it is unsafe.

2015/8194 MONITORING OF CYCLE EVENTS DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett explained that together with the Clerk, some 20 cycling events have been identified so far this year and whilst it is a very time consuming exercise, several clashes with drifts have been averted as a result. The Wiggle agreed to change its route to avoid the Hill Top drift which is scheduled for this coming Saturday and as a result, most of the Wiggle route is now away from the Forest. Another drift was put back one hour and a clash was avoided.

2015/8195 COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH DISCHARGE

The Court has been asked to support the community speed watch scheme being extended to include some 40 mph Forest roads. However, the police do not support the proposal on the grounds of health and safety.

The Court agrees conceptually, but will not support the proposal against Police advice. The Clerk will advise the proponents accordingly.

Action
SW

2015/8196 REPAIRS TO MINSTEAD BRIDLEWAY NO.10 – LOWER CANTERTON DISCHARGE
& MUDDY LANE, EMERY DOWN

Mr Stride commented that the work on these rights of way has been completed to a good standard.

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

2015/8197 SSSI RESTORATION PROJECT AT PONDHEAD RESUME

Mrs Sally Hayward from Pondhead has asked the Secretary of State to call in the planning application. The Secretary of State has in turn passed the matter to the planning inspectorate which has gone to Natural England for its view. Natural England has passed it on to their legal team. Mrs Westerhoff undertook to try to find out how the matter is progressing.

Action
DW

FINANCIAL MATTERS

2015/8198 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR JULY & AUGUST 2015 RESUME

The Financial Statement was noted.

2015/8199 VERDERERS BUDGET AND FIVE YEAR PLAN DISCHARGE

The Government is imposing further cuts to all departments, and it is inevitable that the reduction in funding will be passed down the line. Careful control of the Court's expenditure is therefore imperative.

STAFF MATTERS

2015/8200 POUNDS AT ADLAMS LANE, BRIDGE FARM AND CANTERTON DISCHARGE

Work to repair or replace these pounds as necessary will be undertaken over the coming winter. They are not part of the HLS/VGS Pound project.

2015/8201 AGISTERS' LANDROVERS RESUME

Serious problems have occurred with two Land Rovers requiring new engines. New engines for Land Rovers are in short supply and as a result, one vehicle has been off the road for a month. That vehicle was now back on the road with a new engine at the end of last week. A replacement engine is still awaited for the second vehicle. A third vehicle is us using oil but so far the reason has not been identified. Although the replacement of the engines is covered by the extended warranty, the cost of the necessary hire vehicles is not and in addition to the inevitable inconvenience, a significant amount of Agister and Office Staff time has been expended.

Mr Readhead has a lease hire proposal which he suggested could usefully be updated with a view to considering whether to replace the Agisters' vehicles, if the budget can be found. The Court agreed this is a sensible way forward and Mr Readhead will obtain annual running costs and forward the details to the Official Verderer.

Action
DR

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2015/8202 CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS ON MINERALS AND WASTE SAFEGUARDING AND OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT IN HAMPSHIRE DISCHARGE

Mrs Westerhoff advised the Court that she has responded to this consultation on behalf of the Court.

2015/8203 CORBETS HAT (NR ACRES DOWN) SSSI RESTORATION SITE RESUME

It was reported that there is a huge area of gravel that will now have to recolonise. The levels are excellent but there was not enough soil left to cover the gravel and as a result it all looks very 'driveable'. It was suggested that in order to prevent vehicular access, a suitably positioned log would help. A request will be made to the FC for this to be arranged. Additionally, a site visit with the FC will be requested.

Action RS

2015/8204 CONSTRUCTION OF STREAM AND RIVER CROSSINGS (FORDS) RESUME

The new ford at Sluffers is felt to be too wide. It is possibly 20 feet wide when it really only needs to be 10 feet.

It was agreed a site visit should be arranged. The Clerk will contact the Deputy Surveyor to ask for a site visit. The Official Verderer, Mrs Westerhoff and Mr Stride would like to attend. The proposal papers will be retrieved from the file.

Action
Clerk

It was suggested that a change of contractor may be partly to blame with the new contractor perhaps needing more guidance.

2015/8205 WELFARE TOUR – DATE FOR THE DECEMBER TOUR

RESUME
December

The Court approved the suggested date of Friday 11th December for the next Welfare Tour of the Forest.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 15:22 hrs.

Domonic May
Official Verderer
21st October 2015