

	There is nothing firm on the future of the Entry Level Scheme (ELS) yet, but it is likely that details of the scheme will be reviewed shortly.	
2. Minutes of the Last Meeting	<p>Actions from the last meeting were discussed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assessment of the Scheme area to take account of inclosures opened up for grazing. A decision on the payment due for the additional land which has been made available for grazing by the opening up of a number of inclosures, is expected soon. • Qualification period for pigs. Andrew Fielder confirmed that a revised form of words will shortly be incorporated in the Agreement to introduce more flexibility into the Scheme with regard to the qualifying period for pigs. 	<p>Andrew Fielder</p> <p>Andrew Fielder</p>
3. Update on the Scheme	<p>We received our cheque from DEFRA which arrived over the Christmas break. As soon as confirmation that it had been paid into our account was received, payments were sent out to Scheme members. In all, a total of just over £303,000.00 was paid out to 384 members. Most application forms for 2006/7 have now been received and a reminder will shortly be sent to those who have not yet responded.</p> <p>The number of pigs turned out during the pannage season rose sharply as hoped – in response to the heavy crop of acorns and the message sent out to commoners. The majority of the 627 pigs which were turned out qualified for payments (a total of £15,675.00) – in the current Scheme year.</p> <p>It is not possible yet to forecast with any accuracy the number of animals likely to be turned out on the Forest this year, although early indications (with most of the ponies already marked) are that there may be a small increase over last years figures. Warnings of the likely consequences for the Scheme (and Scheme payments) of exceeding the 7,000 ceiling were included on membership application forms and agreements.</p>	
4. Animal numbers including impact of Single Payment Scheme	Nothing new to report.	
5. Pony/cattle ratios	There are no indications of any significant change to the ratio reported last year, but we will not know for certain until the bulk of the cattle are turned out later in the Spring.	

