

	<p><i>Interest. The number of pigs turned out will not count towards the maximum or minimum stocking limits stipulated elsewhere in this agreement.'</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 6. Discussed under Item 6. • Item 8. Discussed under Item 8. • Item 9. Discussed under Item 10. 	
<p>3. Scheme Update</p>	<p>The claim form for the fourth year was submitted in September and payment from DEFRA is expected by the beginning of December, although payment for the additional area is not expected until later. In the meantime, the money that is being carried over as a contingency fund will enable full payments to be made to Scheme members, avoiding the necessity for supplementary payments when the additional money arrives.</p> <p>It has been a difficult year for those with cattle and pigs, with a TB case in the North of the Forest in early Summer and the FMD and Bluetongue restrictions that followed. These both affected the ability of commoners to move stock and, as a result, some members were unable to turn out their cattle for the full 4 months qualifying period – it was agreed at the last meeting that in these circumstances the qualifying period could be reduced, and this decision was endorsed by the Sub Committee. The restrictions also prevented commoners from turning out pigs for the first few weeks of the pannage season. Fortunately, restrictions were lifted in time for some pigs to be turned out, although not for the required 40 days – a shorter qualifying period has been approved by the Sub Committee. Fortunately, most areas had very few acorns, or none at all, so the absence of pigs for much of the pannage season has not been critical.</p> <p>Scheme membership is very similar to last year and so, once again, animal numbers entered in the Scheme are inevitably greater than the limit of 5,000 on which we are allowed to make payments: the total is a little over 5,350. A proportional reduction will therefore be made to the numbers entered by individual members and payments will be adjusted accordingly.</p> <p>The total number of animals turned out has risen gradually throughout the year and there are now just over 7,000 animals on the Marking Fee Register. Members will again have their attention drawn to the urgent need to reverse this increase and bring the numbers down below the 7,000 ceiling.</p> <p>The recent announcement about the threefold increase in the amount that will be paid for their 'commons' entitlement to those who have registered for SPS on the New Forest has been given a cautious welcome – the caution due largely to past delays and uncertainties over payments by the RPA. It is likely that the full benefit will not be realised until commoners start to receive their additional money.</p>	

<p>4. Animal numbers</p>	<p>Animal Numbers</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="486 271 1018 432"> <tr> <td>Total Ponies</td> <td>4,475</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Cattle</td> <td>2,528</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Donkeys</td> <td>118</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>7,121</td> </tr> </table>	Total Ponies	4,475	Total Cattle	2,528	Total Donkeys	118	Total	7,121	
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<p>5. Cattle ratio</p>	<p>Cattle currently constitute 35.5% of the total number of animals on the Forest – comfortably above the target of 25%.</p>									
<p>6. Payment levels/ premiums for registered New Forest ponies/cattle</p>	<p>Payment Levels/Premiums. The meeting endorsed the decision of the Sub Committee to maintain ‘basic’ payments at the same level as last year – the actual payment will be £56.00 - and to pay a premium of £15.00 for registered pure bred NF ponies and cattle entered in the Scheme. These premiums will be paid at the same time as the main (or basic) payment.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the recent announcement over increased SPS payments would not affect CSS payments as the two are not related.</p> <p>With regard to cattle, the meeting noted the comments of the sub committee regarding the practice of bringing cattle in for feeding on a daily basis during the Winter. Clarification was provided that this was only a concern where damage was caused as a result. It was agreed that such incidents should be addressed on a case by case basis as necessary.</p>									
<p>7. Additional Support For Young Commoners</p>	<p>Once again the meeting considered the difficulties associated with providing additional support to young commoners. This is complicated by the fact that the number of animals entered in the Scheme is already 7% over the limit of 5,000 on which payment is permitted (and is projected to rise by a further 5%), and by the total number of animals on the Forest which is already at the maximum permitted level. It was noted that the current arrangements allow entitlements to be passed on by retiring commoners to other family members, which is one way in which the Scheme is already able to provide additional assistance to some young commoners. A number of families have taken advantage of this option.</p> <p>Rick Manley proposed that efforts should be made to identify additional grazing in the Avon Valley and other areas outside the Forest, with priority for access to this given to young commoners (<i>this links to Item 8</i>). It was agreed that Ian Stone would speak to the Young Commoners Group - Colin Draper will also attend if required (<i>subsequently confirmed</i>). Ian Stone reported that Rhys Morgan is gradually gaining the confidence of landowners in the Avon Valley. Closer links between these landowners and New Forest commoners would work to the advantage of both groups and this will continue to be pursued.</p>	<p>Ian Stone</p>								

	<p>There was discussion over the future of the ‘Forest Friendly Farming’ post occupied by Ian Stone. This is currently funded until March 2008. His post, and that of Rhys Morgan, are of considerable benefit to commoners, and Ian’s assistance with SPS applications was particularly noted. Furthermore, Ian’s assistance to commoners over ‘cross compliance’ is of continuing importance. It was agreed that the possibility of the Scheme making a contribution towards the funding for these posts would be included as an agenda item at the next meeting.</p>	Colin Draper/ Emma Rigglesworth
8. Additional Areas for Grazing	<p>The meeting noted the paper written by Neil Sanderson and Peter Frost, proposing grazing the Costicles area. This has received support from the Forestry Commission, subject to some alteration of the proposed boundaries in line with the ‘Fencing & Grazing Strategy which is part of the Forest Design Plan. The Design Plan is the subject of a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid.</p> <p>Recommendations for additional work to restore grazing identified by the ‘Survey of Lost Lawns’, which is due for completion by January 2008, are also likely to be included in the bid. It was agreed, subject to any ‘dual funding’ restrictions which might exclude financial support from the Stewardship Scheme, that the Scheme should provide up to £10,000 as part of the matched funding, should the bid be successful – other likely partners include the NPA, Natural England and the Forestry Commission.</p>	
9. Bovine TB/FMD/ Bluetongue Restrictions – Impact on Scheme	See Item 3.	
10. Commoning Review	The Commoning Review is now complete and was presented to the NPA in October. Copies of the report will be forwarded to members.	Emma Rigglesworth
11. AOB	<p>1. Rick Manley informed members that he will be attending a meeting in Cumbria on 28 November to discuss the establishment of ‘Commoners’ Associations’. It was noted that the establishment of such associations is a provision of the ‘Commons Bill’ which does not apply to the New Forest, and that DEFRA recognises the special arrangements for the New Forest.</p> <p>2. Diana Westerhoff briefed the meeting on the PSA programme. This requires SSSIs to be brought into favourable condition by 2010. There are still 3,500 hectares of the New Forest which require further work, and Natural England will be consulting with the Verderers/CDA over this and other longer term plans for future work. Members were reminded that failure to achieve this could impact on the SPS and the Stewardship Scheme.</p> <p>3. The Chairman provided a short explanation of the situation over HLS bids. A target area map has been produced which identifies those areas most likely to receive support; he agreed to provide</p>	

	copies for members. Suitable HLS bids on land within the target areas have an 80% chance of receiving HLS funding. This drops to 20% for land outside the target areas. Although not shown on the map as a target area, bids for support for land within the New Forest SSSI should also enjoy the same chance of success as the 'target' areas.	Andrew Fielder
12. Date of Next Meeting	The next meeting will be held in the Library in the Queen's House at 10.00 am on Thursday 13 th March 2008.	All

27 November 2007

C F R DRAPER
Scheme Manager
Secretary

Distribution:

All members
All Verderers