

**MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014 at 9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.**

PRESENT:	Mr Dominic May	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Mr B Dowsett	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Miss D Macnair MBE	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mr D Readhead	Elected Verderer
	Mr R Stride	Co-opted Verderer
	Mr G M H Mills	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister (to 7046)
ABSENT:	Mr A Gerrelli	Elected Verderer
	Mr C Maton	National Park Appointed Verderer

**IN COMMITTEE in the Library**

2014/7041 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> December 2013 were agreed and signed.

2014/7042 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

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

Mr Hallam Mills declared an interest in HLS Schemes as his Estate is in Higher Level Stewardship. The Estate is also involved in the Better Boundaries Project, run by the New Forest Land Advice Service with support from Natural England. Mr Mills is also a Patron of the New Forest Trust.

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

Mr Stride reminded the Court that he is an employee of the Forestry Commission.

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

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

2014/7043 CONDITION OF STOCK RESUME

The Head Agister reported that overall the stock remains in good condition. However, the dismal weather over the past few weeks is now beginning to have an impact and some ponies, mostly mares with foals and young stock, are beginning to lose condition. If the weather continues to be wet the Agisters will be busy.

Miss Macnair reported that Burley Manor has recently lost two horses to suspected sycamore poisoning. The problem was originally been seen in Canada but has been spreading in Europe in the past few years. The Head Agister said that so far it has not been a problem on the Forest. Mr Stride commented that as sycamore is non-native, the policy is to eradicate it wherever possible in the Forest. Matley, Denny and Bolderwood in particular have quantities of the plant and these areas are being dealt with under the HLS project to remove non-native species.

The number of deaths due to acorn poisoning has slowed down with fewer cases in the past month. So far this winter, 90 animal deaths (on the Forest) have been attributed to poisoning.

The Forest's cattle are in good condition. Some are now going home to be fed whilst a few commoners are utilising their official feeding areas. The feeding areas will be monitored to ensure that unacceptable poaching is avoided, especially given the current very wet weather.

One pony owner who was feeding in the wrong area was spoken to and has now moved to her allocated site.

The question of the types of feed that are permitted was then raised as some cattle commoners are feeding cob nuts. There was some uncertainty as to whether cob nuts are permitted and Mrs Westerhoff and the Clerk were asked to check the Court records as well as the SAC Plan and VGS agreement to see what has been agreed in the past.

Action  
DW/SW

Mr Dowsett suggested a letter should be sent to the New Forest Hounds, thanking their staff for their help in removing animals which have succumbed to acorn poisoning during a period of particularly difficult conditions and an increased workload. It was agreed a letter should be sent.

Action  
SW

2014/7044 STOCK LOSING CONDITION AND REMOVED FROM THE FOREST RESUME

1 mare was removed in December 2013.

The total removed in 2013 was 345 compared with 218 in 2012. It was, however, pointed out that the number of animals on the Forest has also increased.

2014/7045 MARKING FEES RECEIVED IN 2013 RESUME

	Forest	Common	Total
Ponies	4387	729	5116
Cattle	2523	968	3491
Donkeys	94	71	165
Pigs	329	50	379
Sheep	0	113	113
Total	7333	1931	9153

Ponies, cattle and donkeys on the Forest – 7004  
 Ponies, cattle and donkeys on the Common – 1768  
 Total Ponies, Cattle and Donkeys – 8772

2014/7046 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT

RESUME

A number of pigs remained on the Forest after the pannage season. A list of owners has been drawn up and details will be provided for consideration by the VGS Management Committee. Penalties will be applied once all relevant facts have been taken into account.

**The Head Agister left the meeting**

2014/7047 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS

RESUME

The announcements and decisions were approved.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mark Street, Area Land Agent (New Forest)

Miss Mellissa Jones, Assistant Land Agent (New Forest) (Open Court Only)

APOLOGIES: Mr Mike Seddon, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest (DS)

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER**

2014/7048 GELDINGS

At our October Court, Susan Mitchell made a presentment in favour of geldings being turned out on the Forest. We have decided not to change our new policy that, from 1st March 2014, geldings will not receive a payment from the Verderers Grazing Scheme.

2014/7049 ROAD SIGNAGE

At our November Court, Richard Deacon from the Commoners' Defence Association made a presentment about Hampshire County Council's plan to remove signs warning of animals on the road. I therefore wrote to the portfolio holder, Sean Woodward, and I have received a reply which I will pass on to Mr Deacon. Mr Woodward states that the large yellow signs will be retained at Godshill and Wittensford. He says that any plans for removing or changing signs will be subject to consultation with the Verderers and the CDA, but he commits to the retention of all the existing signs which say Watch Out animals on Road Day and Night. He also commits to replacing the Wild Horses signs at the cattle grids when missing.

Mr Deacon asked that the Verderers call a meeting to discuss the B3078 animal accidents. The Animal Accident Reduction Group already exists for exactly that reason and the Verderers' Clerk chairs the meetings and our Head Agister is a permanent member.

Mr Deacon also proposed that the CDA place a coloured marker post set back from the verge at each animal accident site so that there is a reminder to road users to drive carefully. The Court agreed that this innovative idea should be trialled for one year subject to the necessary consent being obtained from the Forestry Commission on whose land the posts and signs will be placed, and any conditions which may be imposed by the Highway Authority. The trial is agreed on the understanding that it will be managed by the CDA which will take full responsibility for it, including in respect of any liability issues which may arise. The Forestry Commission will wish to ensure that the CDA has appropriate public liability insurance in the event of any unforeseen incidents or accidents. The Forestry Commission requests a detailed proposal from the CDA for consideration.

2014/7050 JACK DONKEYS

At our November Court, Mike Eccles for the CDA requested that the Verderers control Jack Donkeys. The Verderers will therefore investigate, with the Jack Donkey owners, a scheme similar to that which we run for Stallions, to be off the forest except for a short period in the summer.

2014/7051 DEFRA TB CONSULTATION

DEFRA sent out a national consultation in late November proposing, amongst other things, some changes to the way that bovine TB is controlled. The main proposal affected what they call Commons, although as you know, the New Forest is not technically a Common. In order to achieve a tighter control, it was suggested by Defra that the exemptions from testing pre- and post-movement on to Commons would be withdrawn. In other words, some form of testing would have to take place before cattle were depastured or brought back into the holding. In some cases, that would technically mean a daily test, which is clearly impossible. Such a rule would stop cattle being turned out on the New Forest.

The Verderers have communicated with DEFRA, the CDA, Dartmoor, the NFU and the CLA in order to explain the ancient and particular commoning rights in the New Forest. We have made it clear that the Forest habitat needs a significant grazing effort from both cattle and ponies in combination, and that we have obligations to the rules laid down in our Higher Level Stewardship Scheme. We have also gained support from Natural England's Commons Unit.

The Verderers share the grave concern about the spread of TB nationally, and we very much wish to maintain the New Forest free of TB, creating a "Fortress Forest", eventually leading to Officially TB-Free Status.

The Verderers have suggested that the exemption could be replaced by a licence to move cattle freely as at present onto and off the Forest, where the cattle are staying on land with rights attached. Other movements would have to submit to normal testing rules. We are concerned about the import of animals from known TB areas and will work to make sure they are tested very thoroughly and perhaps even quarantined for a post-movement test.

DEFRA officers have taken the trouble during this consultation period to come down to the New Forest and learn more about our commoning practices. There are many details still to work out, and the Verderers will, with the other interested parties in the Forest, continue to work with DEFRA to reach a practical and effective solution before the proposals become law in April of this year.

2014/7052 HLS VISIT TO QUEEN'S MEADOW RIVERINE RESTORATION

Last week, the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme Board visited Queen's Meadow to see the completed riverine restoration work in that area. The restored areas have recovered extremely well and it is no longer easy to identify the original routes of watercourses where these have been filled in. The separate streams have been returned to their original meanders, and these are working well. After the recent heavy rainfall, good evidence was seen of where the streams had flooded onto the surrounding flood plain, leaving beneficial organic matter deposited which would otherwise be washed downstream and lost out to sea. The end result is an excellent example of an HLS project which has turned the clock back, to re-wilderness an area, increasing biodiversity and improving environmental condition. The Verderers continue to support the HLS's programme of wetland restorations which will provide long term benefits for the environment, flood mitigation and grazing.

2014/7053 STALLIONS

We will once again be turning out 10 stallions this summer for a period of 4 weeks with the dates to be advised later.

The stallion inspection is on Saturday, 26th April at Beaulieu Road, after which stallion owners will be notified which stallions and colts have been selected to run out this year. Mature stallions, over 5 years old, that are currently in the Verderers' Stallion Scheme, will not need to be presented.

We are currently seeking a meeting with the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society with a view to discussing and agreeing how we can ensure that more young colts with diverse bloodlines are licenced and are therefore available to be turned out on the Forest. This is essential to secure the long term viability of the New Forest Pony breed, particularly following the recent notification by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust that the New Forest pony will appear as a category 5 Minority on the 2014 Watchlist.

## **ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT**

2014/7054 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2013 AND FOR THE WHOLE OF 2013

I am sorry but this report is inevitably made up of statistics. Some people, understandably I think, claim that statistics don't save animals' lives but that is not strictly true. By knowing where most accidents occur, it is possible to target often scarce resources to the most relevant areas in order to try to reduce the number of accidents. This may include asking the Police to undertake speed enforcement operations on specific roads, perhaps by improving signage. Other actions include liaising with the Forestry Commission to ensure roadside vegetation is kept cut down to improve driver visibility or asking the Highway Authority to paint white lines along the sides of the roads. The latter is thought to help to slow traffic whilst also helping drivers to see that there is something on the side of the road at night.

Starting with the last two months of last year, the statistics are as follows:-

The Agisters attended 48 accidents in November and December in which  
13 animals were killed, or had to be destroyed,  
10 were injured,  
5 were uninjured, and  
19 animals weren't found.

5 accidents occurred in daylight and  
9 in twilight.

37 of the vehicles involved were cars or light commercials,  
1 was an HGV and  
1 was a motorbike.

26 motorists were local and  
8 drivers failed to report having had an accident.

### **THE RTA REPORT FOR 2013**

There were 181 accidents last year in which 104 animals were killed and injured.

15 of the 54 ponies which were killed were wearing reflective collars.

These numbers are a significant increase on 2012 when there were 135 accidents in which 82 animals were killed and injured.

However, 2012 saw a record low number of RTAs involving commoners' animals.

In 2011, there were 172 accidents in which 102 animals were killed or injured.

In 2013 the accidents were spread around the Forest as usual, but some roads saw significantly more accidents than others.

40 accidents occurred on the B3078 between Cadnam and Godshill, and another 10 on the B3079 – between Brook and Landford.

There were 30 on the B3054 Lyminster to Beaulieu – Beaulieu to Dibden,

17 on the C10 between Picket Post and Holmsley Tea Rooms and

15 on the B3055 between Sway and Brockenhurst, over Marlpit Oak.

So once again, the worst two roads for accidents are the B3078 and the B3054. Both these roads are used by commuters. The C10 from Picket Post to Holmsley Tea Rooms is also a bad road and is doubtless also a commuter route. We think drivers fail to adjust their speed on that road when leaving the A31 and we suspect that going the other way, drivers probably increase their speed along the disused railway line which is fenced (although the speed limit is still 40 mph) and fail to slow down once they cross the cattle grid to go up the hill towards Burley. Goatspen was the site of several accidents.  
2014

So far this year, we have had 4 accidents up until yesterday in which 3 ponies were injured and destroyed by the Agister and 1 cow was killed outright. All the accidents occurred in the dark and I am pleased to say that all were reported.

Our message to drivers in 2014 has to be please slow down, particularly at night when it is difficult to see animals in the road and always expect the unexpected. Even if you don't care about the animals, just think how much damage will be caused to your vehicle if you collide with 400kg of pony or half a ton of cow – particularly if you aren't sticking to the speed limit at the time. Our second message has to be – If you hit an animal, report it quickly. Have a little compassion and don't leave something to die in a ditch.

## **PRESENTMENT ON BEHALF OF THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR OF THE NEW FOREST**

None

## **PRESENTMENTS**

2014/7055 TUBERCULOSIS – TB TESTING IN THE FOREST  
Presentment by Mr Brian Ingram, Commoner and retired Head Agister

Mr Ingram expressed concern at Defra's proposals for TB testing. He said he hopes Defra will listen to the advice being offered. If not, he warned a great number of people who have been turning out cattle for years will cease commoning.

*In response, the Official Verderer thanked Mr Ingram for bringing his concerns to the Court's attention. The Official Verderer then turned to the Press and asked the representative present to report on this issue and stress how important it is that Defra understands how the Forest will change if cattle are no longer turned out.*

**IN COMMITTEE in the Library**

**NEW SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

2014/7056 REFURBISHMENT OF THE VERDERERS' HALL DISCHARGE

Following news that the bid for Heritage Lottery Funding has been successful, the Court was keen to hear what is planned for the Verderers' Hall. Mr Street explained that there is an HLF Delivery Group meeting planned for next Monday and the Verderers' Hall refurbishment as well as the Boundaries Project will be discussed. Mr Street said he is currently seeking a Building Surveyor to work on a contract basis to complete the specification for the refurbishment of the Hall and oversee the application for Listing Building Consent which will be required as work on the exterior of the building is necessary. An architect specialising in conservation projects is also being sought. Mr Street added that input from the Verderers would be most welcome. It was agreed that Anthony Pasmore should be asked to continue to work on this project, as he wrote the initial paper for the grant application. The Official Verderer will contact Mr Pasmore.

*Afternote: Mr Pasmore has agreed to represent the Court and provide his input to the Forestry Commission for the refurbishment of the Verderers' Hall.*

Mr Street then explained that Mr Graham Wilson (Estates Keeper) will be retiring soon and funding is also available for someone to take on his role as part of the Boundaries Project.

Mr Street will keep the Court updated as the various projects progress.

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

2014/7057 ORDNANCE CLEARANCE RESUME  
May

The Deputy Surveyor has written to the Ministry of Defence asking for a date for the re-commencement of ordnance clearance at Matley.

Concern was expressed about whether water which has collected in the craters created when the ordnance was blown up may be contaminated by combustion product residues. This question will be directed to the MOD. Action  
MSt/DS

Mr Street said the Forestry Commission is hopeful that the clearance will recommence sometime after April when it is assumed the MOD will have issued a new contract for the work. It was remarked that someone has recently dealt with explosives exposed by the recent stormy weather on Milford Beach and Hurst Spit and it was queried why, if there are personnel to carry out that work, someone cannot be found to clear ordnance in the Forest. It was also suggested that following the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, there may be additional military personnel available with the necessary skills.

**SSSI RESTORATION WORKS**

2014/7058 WOOTTON LAWN SSSI HABITAT RESTORATION PROPOSAL DISCHARGE  
(amendment) following site visit on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2013

Amended proposals have been submitted following a recent site visit. The proposals were approved as drafted, but with the condition that debris dams must be removed where they are having a detrimental impact upon grazing, access, or Commoners stock.

2014/7059 WOOTTON RIVERINE WOODLAND (WEST) SSSI HABITAT DISCHARGE  
RESTORATION PROPOSAL (amendment)

The original scheme for Wootton Riverine Woodland West (Phase 1) was discussed at a consultation site visit and approved by the Verderers Court in 2011 (Minutes April 2011/5456, May 2011/5498 refer). Amended proposals were discussed at the site visit on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and a paper was submitted to the meeting today for approval.

The Court approved the amended proposals subject to the condition that all debris dams must be removed where they are having a detrimental impact upon grazing, access, or Commoners stock.

2014/7060 SNAGGING LIST RESUME

Queen's Meadow will be added as work is required to ensure the lawn is protected. At present it is in danger of being lost. A site visit will be arranged. Action DS

Also at Queen's Meadow, the track has been washed away in the recent rain storms. It was agreed that a good way forward would be to reduce the track down to its old level, so that it does not act as a dam, thus holding less weight of water. DS

Pitts Wood – The northernmost ford has washed out and needs to be reinstated.

**ENCROACHMENTS**

2014/7061 ENCROACHMENT LIST RESUME

A new list was provided and Mr Street updated the Court on the progress of the various issues. In addition, Mr Street advised the Court that the two laybys on the B3078 from Cadnam to Brook have been removed and that the work to protect the Open Forest at Furzey Lodge has also been completed. As respects the latter, Mr Deakin remarked that there was a site meeting at Furzey because of the need to ensure that access for the drift is maintained. Mr Deakin undertook to inspect the work that has been done and report back if there are any problems. Action MSt

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**ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

2014/7062	FLOODING AT LATCHMOOR RAILWAY BRIDGE, BROCKENHURST	RESUME
	<p>The water was pumped out from under Latchmoor Bridge onto the Open Forest instead of into the culvert as was agreed. This may have been because the culvert was full due to heavy rain, but an inspection is required in order to check for erosion.</p>	Action MSt
2014/7063	VINNEY RIDGE/BLACKWATER DRIFTWAY	RESUME
	<p>Several problems need addressing in order to make the driftway passable:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clearance of pine in the driftway.</li> <li>2. Realignment of the fence.</li> <li>3. Mire restoration.</li> </ol> <p>Mr Street said he will tell Jane Smith (FC) that the Court has requested a site meeting. Mr Deakin and Mrs Westerhoff said they would like to attend.</p> <p>As there is a mire restoration involved, the Official Verderer suggested that this project could qualify for HLS funding.</p>	Action MSt
2014/7064	NORTH BENTLEY – OLD MANHOLE COVER	DISCHARGE
	<p>An old concrete manhole cover which could be part of the old airfield drainage infrastructure is breaking up. It is a serious hazard to stock as there are holes at the corners in which an animal could break a leg. Mr Stride confirmed he knows where it is and will arrange for it to be made safe as a matter of urgency.</p>	Action RS
2014/7065	BURLEY GOLF COURSE	DISCHARGE
	<p>Burley Golf Course is littered with signs, seats and all sorts of other paraphernalia out of keeping with a Forest course. Mr Street was asked to speak to the management about reducing the clutter. It was suggested that the New Forest Course at Lyndhurst would be a good example for the management of Burley to inspect to help them to understand what is expected.</p>	Action MSt
2014/7066	DRIFT REVIEW – ACTION LIST FOLLOWING WASH-UP MEETING	RESUME March
	<p>Mr Deakin said that he has an action list following the recent Drift Wash-Up meeting which he has forwarded to Zoe Cox. Some of the risk assessments have been re-written. These will also be forwarded in due course.</p>	Action RD
2014/7067	FALLEN WOOD REMOVAL POLICY – REVIEW	RESUME October
	<p>This document is due for review in October. The Court requested an input.</p>	Action MS

2014/7068	MAINTENANCE OF INCLOSURE DITCHES	DISCHARGE
	<p>Mr Street was asked whether the Forestry Commission has a policy covering the maintenance of inclosure ditches. Some passageways follow the fenceline of inclosures and failure to maintain drains in the inclosures results in a serious deterioration of the passageway outside; Wootton being a good example.</p> <p>Mr Street said that as far as he is aware there is no formal policy, but such clearance is undertaken on a case by case basis. He added that if the FC has either a legal obligation or a practical need to maintain a passageway the work will be carried out, otherwise he suggested requests should be made in specific cases.</p>	
2014/7069	KINGS COPSE DITCH	RESUME
	<p>Mr Readhead expressed concern that the very deep and dangerous ditch at Kings Copse that was dug by a local resident has still not been made safe. Mr Street said that the FC is waiting to see whether Natural England expects the property owner to do the work under a Community Resolution Order or whether the FC is to carry it out. Mr Readhead repeated that the ditch is dangerous and an animal or person could be seriously injured.</p>	Action MSt
2014/7070	FINANCIAL LIABILITY FOR BREACHES BY LICENCEES OF HLS CROSS COMPLIANCE CONDITIONS	RESUME
	<p>The Court asked whether the Golf Courses and other sporting facilities on the Open Forest carry indemnity insurance in respect of actions they undertake which may result in a penalty being imposed by the RPA for a cross compliance failure. The recent issue of one of the Golf Clubs using out of date chemicals, banned substances, and using chemicals in the wrong place, plus failing to keep adequate records was cited as the most serious example which may result in up to £100,000 being lost from the HLS payment this year and it was suggested that the Golf Clubs etc., could insure against such a loss.</p> <p>Mr Street explained that the Golf Clubs and other licensees have a responsibility to the Forestry Commission and in turn the Forestry Commission is responsible to the Verderers. For that reason he felt it unlikely that the licensees could carry indemnity insurance upon which the Verderers could claim.</p> <p>Mr Mills said that the terms of the HLS agreement should be mirrored in tenancy agreements for golf courses and sporting facilities on the Forest, so that the HLS rules are enforceable on the tenant.</p> <p>Mr Street also pointed out that it would not be possible to impose new conditions on licensees with old agreements although it is perfectly feasible to introduce new conditions in new licences.</p> <p>It was pointed out, however, that it is theoretically possible to insure against anything. Mr Street said he will investigate whether such an insurance policy is commercially viable.</p>	Action Mst

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014 in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.

2014/7071 BRAMSHAW GOLF COURSE DISCHARGE

A further meeting is due. Mr Street will take this forward. Action  
MSt

Mr Street advised the Court that the General Manager of this Golf Club has retired. A replacement, Mr Steve James, has been appointed.

2014/7072 ALUM GREEN WATER LEAK DISCHARGE

This water leak has been ongoing for two years. The lawn is in a very poor state. Mr Street said he will pursue it.

**Mr Street left the meeting**

**OTHER MATTERS ARISING**

2014/7073 REPLACEMENT SINGLE FARM PAYMENT SCHEME RESUME

Mr Mills said that under the CAP reform, there will be a new scheme with a changed rate of support for farming as well as the environment. In essence 15% of CAP payments would be transferred from farmers' direct payments over to rural development (to improve the environment, create jobs and grow the rural economy). Mr Mills undertook to find out if any decisions have yet been made, in particular any that may affect the management of common land. Action  
HM

2014/7074 DEFRA PROPOSALS FOR NEW TUBERCULOSIS (TB) CONTROL MEASURES RESUME

The Official Verderer thanked Mr Gerrelli and Mr Mills for drafting a very detailed and excellent response to the consultation. There is a need to look at the practicability of quarantining cattle and Mr Mills was invited to attend the next Staff Committee meeting to discuss TB control. Action  
HM

Mrs Westerhoff commented that it is important to ensure that Defra realises that the New Forest SSSI could fall into unfavourable condition if cattle numbers reduce.

2014/7075 LONG MEADOW, NEW PARK - BLOODLINES SCHEME RESUME  
April

As part of this discussion, the Court considered resuming the Bloodlines Scheme. Mr Deakin proposed that it should recommence, this year if possible, Miss Macnair seconded the proposal which was carried unanimously.

Agister Robert Maton will be asked to manage the scheme as he has considerable knowledge of New Forest Pony bloodlines and can work closely with the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society. Action  
RM

In view of this, it was agreed that Long Meadow should be retained and the fencing attended to. Action  
CD

2014/7076 TRANQUILITY MAPPING RESEARCH MEETING DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett agreed to represent the Court at this meeting which is due to be held in the National Park's offices in the Town Hall, Lymington at 2.30 p.m. on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> January. Mr Dowsett will report back as necessary. Action  
BD

## HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME (HLS)

2014/7077 HEALTH CHECK DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer was pleased to report that the HLS Scheme passed its recent Health Check with flying colours. The management was complimented on the new Terrestrial Works programme, The Historics Consultation Paper, and the Historics Priority List.

2014/7078 DRIFT SIGNAGE DISCHARGE

The additional signage for the drifts was approved. This will be paid for by the VGS.

## VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME (VGS)

2014/7079 RPA INSPECTION RESUME

RPA inspectors found the following two serious problems:

1. one of the Golf Clubs using out of date chemicals, banned substances, and using chemicals in the wrong place, plus failing to keep adequate records;

2. poaching outside one commoner's holding; the RPA will request a report from Natural England on the condition of the ground, which did not fully recover during last summer.

An appeal can be made against the threatened fine of £100K for breaches of the terms of the agreement.

Action  
OV

The tripartite agreement (between the Verderers, FC and NPA) needs to be scrutinised and a management framework agreed in order to avoid such a situation occurring in the future.

## MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

2014/7080 WIGGLE CYCLING EVENTS DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin said he recently attended a meeting of Fawley Parish Council. The Parish Council is shortly to make a decision regarding the use of Gang Warily by the Wiggle organisers for their autumn event.

## FINANCIAL MATTERS

2014/7081 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 2013 RESUME

The financial statement was noted.

## STAFF MATTERS

2014/7082 BRAND DECLARATION FORMS DISCHARGE

A list of commoners who have failed to complete and return their declaration forms will be drawn up. Anyone who is a member of the VGS who has not returned his or her form, may be penalised.

Action  
CD

- 2014/7083 COMMONER FEEDING ANIMALS IN AN UNAUTHORISED AREA RESUME  
March  
A commoner at Hale has been feeding animals at a site that has not been agreed. The details will be considered by the VGS Management Committee.
- 2014/7084 UNLAWFUL MOVEMENT OF STOCK DISCHARGE  
Several complaints have been received from commoners who believe their animals have been moved away from their usual haunts to other parts of the Forest.  
Commoners are keeping a careful watch on any of their animals which run in the Ashurst area.  
Moving other people's animals without their consent is a clear breach of the Verderers' Byelaws which may be dealt with by prosecution and/or penalty under the VGS.
- 2014/7085 BREACHES OF THE BYELAWS AND PENALTIES UNDER THE VGS DISCHARGE  
A recent decision that has subsequently been questioned has highlighted the importance of ensuring detailed evidence is available in the case of commoners accused of breaching the byelaws. In future, a full written report will be provided to the VGS Management Committee in all cases where there is a suggestion that a penalty under the VGS may be applied. The same applies to any potential prosecutions.

#### HEALTH & SAFETY & TRAINING

- 2014/7086 HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURES RESUME  
Action  
Agisters/CD  
Checks are in progress to ensure compliance with certain procedures. In the case of the monthly vehicle checks, one or two defects have been found which will be rectified.  
Action  
RD  
Some loose ends require tidying up as respects the Health and Safety procedures and these will be worked through over the next few months in order of priority.  
Health and Safety is subject to continual review and training is arranged and undertaken as and when a need is identified.

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 2014/7087 SPRING WELFARE TOUR OF THE FOREST RESUME  
May  
2014  
The Court agreed the Welfare Tour will take place on Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 13.14 hrs.