

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 17th September 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
	Mr A Gerrelli	Elected Verderer
	Miss D Macnair MBE	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mr C Maton	National Park Appointed Verderer
	Mr G M H Mills	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mr D Readhead	Elected Verderer
	Mr R Stride	Co-opted Verderer
	Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer

IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister

APOLOGIES: None

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2014/7449	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	RESUME
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The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 16th July 2014 were approved and signed.

2014/7450	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	RESUME
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The Official Verderer, the Elected Verderers, Mr Stride and Mr Maton all declared an interest in the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme and the Verderers Grazing Scheme.

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

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

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

The 5 Elected Verderers declared an interest in the Honorarium.

2014/7451	AGISTER MIKE LOVELL	DISCHARGE
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The Head Agister reported that Agister Lovell whose horse came down with him on the Ipley Drift, is recovering from an operation to pin and plate a broken collar bone.

2014/7452 CONDITION OF STOCK RESUME

Over all the condition of stock is very good.

2014/7453 STRANGLES & THE DRIFTS DISCHARGE

The strangles outbreak is continuing. A number of drifts have been cancelled in order to avoid stressing ponies which may be ill and also to avoid spreading the disease. Where drifts have been cancelled it may be necessary to catch ponies later in the year. This will be arranged by the Agisters.

The outbreak will eventually run its course although it appears to be more prolonged than on previous occasions. Some areas of the Forest now appear to be clear as ponies previously affected have recovered.

The current advice from the Verderers' veterinary advisor remains to leave ponies with strangles on the Forest unless they become very sick or lose a lot of condition. This advice continues to be followed.

The Animal Health Trust has offered to help with a study on Strangles in the New Forest Pony herd, but nothing can be done until next year after the present outbreak has run its course. The Court confirmed support for the study subject to further details.

2014/7454 STOCK LOSING CONDITION AND REMOVED FROM THE FOREST IN AUGUST RESUME

1 mare with a foal and 1 mare on her own. Total of 2.

In August 2013, 1 mare was removed.

The year to date figure is 161. In 2013 it was 340.

2014/7455 MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE IN 2014 RESUME

	Forest	Commons	Total
Ponies	4323	723	5046
Cattle	2674	1098	3772
Donkeys	96	60	156
Pigs	0	23	23
Sheep	0	142	142
Total	7093	2046	9139

Ponies, cattle and donkeys on the Forest – 7093
Ponies, cattle and donkeys on the Commons – 1881
Total Ponies, Cattle and Donkeys – 8974

2014/7456 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT RESUME

No byelaw offences have been reported.

Head Agister Jonathan Gerrelli left the meeting

2014/7457 ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS RESUME

The announcements were approved.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mike Seddon, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest
Mr Paul Grugeon, Land Agent (New Forest)

ANNOUNCEMENT AND DECISIONS

2014/7458 DITCH END

The Verderers are very grateful to Colin Draper at our July Court, for drawing to our attention the work at Ditch End. We had a robust discussion about this subject in committee afterwards, and it was decided that the Verderers should make a site visit. Four Verderers attended on the 23rd July, a week after the July Court, along with a representative of the Commoners Defence Association. Forestry Commission staff were present and explained the rationale for the works. It was decided that a re-visit will be required at the start of next year, to assess how the works have reacted to rainfall, and see whether any settlement occurs. After the next site visit, I will update the Court further.

2014/7459 WALKING GOURMET PICNIC

Also at our July Court, Mrs Mary Gray brought to the Court's attention an advertised Gourmet Picnic. Such commercial activities on the Crown Lands could be legal, where covered by the necessary permission. The Clerk checked with the Forestry Commission, and the organiser had applied for a formal permission for this event. There are many events of different types which take place on the Crown Lands of the New Forest, and the Verderers are keen that organisers of such events do apply for permission from the Forestry Commission. Applying for a formal permission means the organisers of such events can be advised whether their event is likely to clash with other activities in the area and, if so, an alternative location can be agreed. The system also enables the Forestry Commission to impose conditions to safeguard the Forest. It is better that such events are run with the formal permission of the Forestry Commission.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2014/7460 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR JULY & AUGUST 2014

Firstly, July's accident statistics:-

The Agisters attended 9 accidents compared with 16 in July last year.

A cow and a pony were killed,
1 pony was injured and subsequently destroyed,
1 pony was injured,
On one occasion the animal escaped uninjured and
On four occasions no injured animal was found.

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

One of the accidents was not reported. The accidents which were reported all involved cars or light commercials. 4 motorists were local. The other drivers came from Alderbury and Southampton.

Turning to August's accidents:-

The Agisters attended 10 accidents, the same number as August last year.

A cow and two Donkeys were killed, two ponies and one cow were injured and

subsequently destroyed, a pony and two donkeys were injured and on two occasions no injured animals were found.

5 accidents occurred in daylight, 4 in the dark and 1 at twilight.

5 accidents, 50%, were not reported.

The accidents which were reported all involved cars or light commercials. 4 motorists were local. The other driver came from Bournemouth.

As there were 19 accidents over the two months, I am not going to list them all, however, many occurred on the usual high risk roads such as the road between Lymington and Beaulieu, Cadnam and Fordingbridge and Brockenhurst and Hatchet Pond.

The total number of accidents this year is 47 compared with 62 that occurred in the same period last year. Let us hope this reduction in the number of accidents is maintained as winter approaches.

I do want to report on an accident that occurred last night that I have just been told about by Agister Robert Maton.

At approximately 8.30 p.m. on the B3055 at Latchmoor, Brockenhurst, a mule was hit by two cars and killed. The first car injured the animal and whilst it was lying in the road a second vehicle collided with it and killed it. Neither driver has reported the accident. From pieces of vehicle found at the scene we think the first vehicle to collide with the donkey might have been an Audi.

PRESENTMENTS BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR

2014/7461 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 Saturday 20 September 2014 and that it will end on Sunday 23 November 2014, 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.

2014/7462 AWARD TO RICHARD STRIDE

"With the permission of the Official Verderer, as my second presentment, I would like to make an award to Richard Stride.

Richard, I am commanded to present to you the Imperial Service Medal which Her Majesty the Queen has been graciously pleased to award to you in recognition of the meritorious services which you have rendered".

Response by Richard Stride:-

"I wish to say that I consider it to be an honour and a great surprise to receive this award for my time working for the Forestry Commission. This has been 47 years full of happy memories and events.

Working with many colourful characters that spent their lives maintaining our precious Forest, I feel duty bound that I should record some of these memories as a tribute to the people who helped shape the working Forest, and even if I can only remember 75% I think it could make for some very interesting reading.

I think it is fair to say that as a family, the Forest is well and truly in our blood. My father spent his working life with the Forestry Commission and my two brothers are currently employed by them, as is my youngest son, Philip.

I only have one wish for the future. I hope that our three sons and their families can have from the Forest the same pleasure and fulfilment in their lives as Caroline and I have had for the past 44 years".

PRESENTMENTS

2014/7463 AWARD TO RICHARD STRIDE

Presentment by Mr Graham Ferris, Chairman of the New Forest Commoners' Defence Association

"I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to you Richard at the award that Her Royal Highness has bestowed up on you and to thank you for all you have done. You have been a vital link between the commoners and the Forestry Commission as respects what goes on on-the-ground and we hope that will continue with the Verderers".

2014/7464 B3055 ROAD SURFACE

Presentment by Mr Graham Ferris, Chairman of the New Forest Commoners' Defence Association

"The B3055 from the entrance to the Pig to Hatchet has been resurfaced in very black material. We thought there was an agreement with Hampshire Highways that they would use a light coloured surface on Forest roads to improve animal visibility?"

In response, the Official Verderer said that the Court is also concerned about surface dressing methods which are detrimental to grazing. Chippings are spread onto tar and some end up on the edges of the road as well as on the verges. Vehicles travelling along the roads then spread the chippings further. The Official Verderer added that this is a form of encroachment on the Forest grazing and efforts are being made to get Hampshire County Council Highways Authority to deal with the problem.

The Official Verderer said both issues are being discussed with Hampshire Highways.

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mike Seddon, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest
Mr Paul Grugeon, Land Agent (New Forest)
Mr Mark Street, Head of Estates

2014/7465 WELCOME TO NEW LAND AGENT

DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor introduced Mr Paul Grugeon who has taken over as Land Agent for the New Forest from Mr Mark Street who has been promoted to Head of Estates and will now be based in Bristol.

Mr Grugeon was Land Agent for the Longleat estate for a number of years before spending a short time with the MOD. He is therefore well versed in rural matters.

The Official Verderer welcomed Mr Grugeon to the meeting.

SUBMISSIONS BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

Mr Stuart James, General Manager, Brook Enterprises and Mr Jason Buckmaster, Senior Greenkeeper for both the Forest and Private Courses joined the meeting for the following item. Miss Leanne Sergeant (Verderers' Grazing Scheme Administrator) was also present.

2014/7466 BRAMSHAW GOLF CLUB

DISCHARGE

Proposals to change the course layout in order to improve the playing conditions have been submitted. The existing course layout is badly affected by poaching in the winter months and the proposed changes to the course layout will help alleviate the problems by directing play away from the most severely affected areas.

The proposals have received Natural England's consent and the Forestry Commission is in agreement with the works that affect the land under its control.

The Court was told that the works will result in some ground being returned to the Forest, including part of the car park close to the 1st tee. This was welcomed by the Court and it will also result in less disturbance to local residents.

The 2008 Survey of the course will be updated once all the work is complete and the management plan will be refreshed to reflect the new layout. Upon completion of the proposals, the Club will have the opportunity to show it is managing the course in accordance with its licence.

Detailed discussions continued during which a number of queries were raised and responses from the Golf Club received and accepted. The Golf Club is confident that the proposed alterations will work. It is envisaged that work will commence in the spring, but that is of course dependent upon weather conditions.

The Court will receive compensation for any temporary loss of grazing as usual.

The discussion then moved on to a paper produced by Mr Readhead which set out a number of concerns about the way that the course is currently being managed. The paper included recommendations for how these concerns should be addressed. Matters such as the fencing of greens, the frequency of mowing the fairways, the type of machinery permitted on the course, demarcation of fairways and the maintenance of paths were amongst matters raised in the paper. The width of new bridges was also discussed and a maximum of 2m was agreed.

The Deputy Surveyor said the Forestry Commission will follow up the points made in Mr Readhead's paper.

Mr James said the Club is keen to follow its licence to the letter.

The proposals were agreed subject to the recommendations in Mr Readhead's paper being carried out and the three usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions and compensation for loss of grazing.

Mr Readhead thanked Mr James and Mr Buckmaster for their co-operation. Mr James in turn thanked the Court for the opportunity to attend the meeting to present their proposals.

Mr Street, Mr James, Mr Buckmaster and Miss Sergeant left the meeting.

2014/7467 SSE PROPOSED UNDERGROUND ELECTRICITY SUPPLY TO DISCHARGE
SPRINGMOOR FARM, POUND LANE, BURLEY

This short stretch of underground cable was approved subject to the three usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions and compensation for loss of grazing.

2014/7468 WOODGREEN PARISH COUNCIL – REFURBISHMENT OF THE DISCHARGE
ACCESS TRACK TO WOODGREEN CEMETERY

The Parish Council wishes to refurbish this Open Forest access track. The work will consist of the clearance of scrub which has encroached onto the track and some fairly significant re-working of the track itself. As this is an existing track, the consent of the Court is not necessary but the Deputy Surveyor wished to seek the views of the Court. Mr Dowsett and Mr Stride agreed to go and the Court delegated authority to them.

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2014/7469 B3055 ROAD SURFACE

DISCHARGE

The Clerk reported that she has already been in contact with Hampshire County Highways about this.

The information received is that the dressing used on this road is slightly different to what would normally be used in the Forest. It is a more resilient 'proprietary' dressing that has increased durability and is better suited to main roads that generally have higher traffic flows. The dressing is darker than other dressings to begin with but it should quickly weather to a lighter grey. An added benefit of the premium binder used on this site is that it helps to minimise chipping loss.

Miss Macnair expressed concern that the new surface may be of the type that is slippery for ridden horses. The Clerk said that assurance has been received in the past that the sort of surface that is known to be slippery to shod horses is never used in the Forest. The Clerk will, however, ask the question again.

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

2014/7470 DITCH END RESTORATION

RESUME
November

The work will be re-inspected after there has been some reasonably significant rainfall.

2014/7471 PROPOSED ELECTRICITY CABLE TO NEW COPSE NORTH & WOODFIDLEY COTTAGES DISCHARGE

Following a site visit by the Official Verderer, revised proposals were submitted. In addition to the written proposal, confirmation was given at this meeting that the cable running down the track from Ladycross Lodge will be buried in the ditch, not dug under the open grazing. The additional pole was agreed. It was also confirmed that the new substation will be sited within the current inclosure fenceline. The proposals were then approved subject to the three usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions and compensation for loss of grazing.

2014/7472 ORDNANCE AT MATLEY

RESUME
January
2015

The Deputy Surveyor was pleased to report that further inspection of the site by MOD personnel is due to take place shortly. A report will then be submitted in December or early January. Once that has been received, it is expected that the Forestry Commission will be able to reconsider its risk assessment of the site. The findings of the risk assessment would inform the Forestry Commission's subsequent actions in respect of future access to and management of the site. Normal landowner responsibilities in respect of public liability continue to rest with the Forestry Commission.

2014/7473 NEW SIGN OUTSIDE NEW PARK

RESUME

Unfortunately this matter has not been progressed and so it will be resumed in October.

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2014/7474	REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE LIST	RESUME
	An up-to-date list was circulated.	
2014/7475	QUEEN'S MEADOW/DRIVER'S NURSERY	RESUME
	The hydrological report on the Queen's Meadow track, which was washed away in heavy rain last winter, has now been received. A Forestry Commission internal meeting will take place to discuss options for the way forward.	
	Mr Stride asked for a site visit to inspect the number of dead trees in the area around Driver's Nursery. Although it was known that trees had died as a result of the wet ground prior to the recent restoration, Mr Stride felt it isn't right that they should be left. The Deputy Surveyor asked that this be raised at the Open Forest Advisory Committee and Mr Stride agreed to do so.	
2014/7476	DATES FOR SITE VISITS	DISCHARGE
	A revised list was circulated. The Clerk asked members of the Court to respond to Miss Sarah Oakley direct.	
2014/7477	STREAM RESTORATION PROJECTS	DISCHARGE
	The Clerk suggested that it would be helpful if once proposals are agreed, a final paper is produced which can be formally signed off. This would help prevent future confusion or disagreement about what was or wasn't agreed and it would make it a lot easier to answer queries that may be raised by members of the public or other interested parties.	
	A discussion took place at the end of which it was agreed that in future a final, dated version of what has been agreed will be produced. It will then be signed off and held on file for future reference. Where necessary the document may also form part of any future planning application.	Action DS
	Those attending site meetings will still be provided with amended proposals in order that they can check that the final document is correct.	Action DS
2014/7478	HARVEST SLADE	DISCHARGE
	Mrs Westerhoff suggested the Court should formally support the planning application for the restoration works at Harvest Slade and the Court agreed a suitable letter should be sent to the National Park Authority Planning Department.	
		Action Clerk
2014/7479	WOOTTON RIVERINE RESTORATION PROPOSALS	DISCHARGE
	The proposals were agreed, but a final document for approval is required.	
		Action DS

ENCROACHMENTS

- 2014/7480 ENCROACHMENT LIST
- An up-to-date encroachment list was provided.
- 2014/7481 PONDHEAD DISCHARGE
- Some of the dragon's teeth will be replaced by the Forestry Commission where they are considered necessary. A ditch will be dug where there is evidence of illegal parking. A new barrier will be erected which will give access, but will protect the green.
- The Deputy Surveyor said he will check to see what signage is permitted under the Farm's access licence as there is a sign on the verge which the occupier has been asked to remove. It may be there is permission for a sign in which case it can remain. Action DS
- A letter from the occupiers of Pondhead Farm has been received by the Clerk together with a copy of a letter sent to the Forestry Commission. The letter states that the occupiers of the farm are not in complete agreement with the Forestry Commission. A suitable response will be sent. Action OV/Clerk
- 2014/7482 FOREST ROAD, BURLEY DISCHARGE
- A formal letter concerning the access has been written to the owner.
- Ditching along the public highway will be carried out in the autumn as part of the wider programme of car free ditching that is due to be undertaken in that part of the Forest.
- 2014/7483 EAST BOLDRE PARKING AREA DISCHARGE
- The Deputy Surveyor said there is no decision as yet regarding the parking area.
- The Court reminded the Deputy Surveyor that the Forestry Commission had agreed to review the whole village. The Deputy Surveyor replied that the Landscape Partnership HLF Scheme should deal with exactly this sort of issue. The Partnership is looking for partners to work with, such as Parish Councils, and will also work with the Forestry Commission to identify suitable projects.
- ### ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION
- 2014/7484 OAK TREE ON CASTLE HILL LANE, BURLEY DISCHARGE
- Miss Macnair asked the Forestry Commission to clear up the remaining debris from the tree that fell across a property boundary in Castle Hill Lane. Miss Macnair added that the fence which was damaged when the tree fell is now in a dangerous condition with barbed wire on the Open Forest. The Deputy Surveyor said that he will ask the Beat Team to look at the problems. Action DS

2014/7485 QUEEN'S BOWER DEBRIS DAM DISCHARGE

Mr Stride reported a debris dam under the Queen's Bower bridge. The Deputy Surveyor said he will add it to the repairs and maintenance list to be reviewed for removal.

The Deputy Surveyor and Mr Grugeon left the meeting

ENCROACHMENTS NOT INVOLVING THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2014/7486 ENCROACHMENT AT HUCKLESBROOK FARM DISCHARGE

Natural England is proceeding with enforcement action. The matter will be discharged from the Minutes and Mrs Westerhoff will come back to the Court when there is something further to report.

Action
DW

OTHER MATTERS ARISING

2014/7487 TB CONTROL PLAN RESUME

An open meeting to discuss the new licence and control plan was held in the Community Centre in Lyndhurst on the 18th August. Andy Patterson from the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratory Agency was present.

The room was full and the meeting was considered to be very helpful with a number of commoners asking questions and obtaining answers.

A questions and answer paper is currently being finalised and will be circulated as soon as possible.

Action
Clerk

The licence which has been issued by AHVLA is valid for one year only. If the conditions of the control plan are not adhered to, the licence which provides the exemption from the requirement for all cattle to be pre movement tested before they move on and off the Forest, can be revoked.

The EU is currently inspecting Defra regarding its control of TB, and its treatment of TB cases. If the EU does not agree with Defra's policies or actions it is possible that EU funding for the compensation payable to UK farmers for animals which are slaughtered under TB regulations may be withdrawn.

2014/7488 HOT BRANDING RESUME

The ministerial visit and the hot branding demonstration is almost finalised.

Action
Clerk

2014/7489 SPEED CAMERA INITIATIVE RESUME

Subject to resolving a query over insurance, the agreement can be signed. The project will commence on 1st October. A press release is due to be released on 22nd September.

Action
RD/Clerk

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

2014/7490 ELECTED VERDERERS HONORARIUM DISCHARGE

In 1992, the Government's Response to the Illingworth Working Party Report on Grazing in the New Forest recommended that Verderers should receive an honorarium of £1,000. However it was not until 1996 that the Verderers' funds were such that it was possible to consider making any such payment.

From 1996 the sum of £250 was paid to each Elected Verderer. In 2002 the honorarium was increased to £500 which is the level at which it has remained ever since. At that time, it was also agreed that expenses in respect of the use of telephone, as well as a mileage payment should also be claimable.

Appointed Verderers are allowed to claim their bone-fide expenses from their appointing organisations.

After careful consideration, Mrs Westerhoff proposed that the Elected Verderers' honorarium should now be increased to £1,000 per annum, but that in future additional expenses will not be claimable. This will benefit the Elected Verderers, but will at the same time reduce the work of the office associated with checking and paying expenses claims. The Elected Verderers requested that the Appointed Verderers decide this increase, and the Appointed Verderers agreed unanimously. The increased honorarium will be payable from this November 2014. Expenses accrued up until the end of October 2014 will also be reimbursed.

Action
Clerk

Honoraria are now subject to tax whereas previously they were not. This will mean that it will be necessary to report the payment of the honoraria to HMRC.

2014/7491 STREET LIGHTING DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett advised the Court that the roll out of the new street lighting is due to start in the Forest villages shortly. Confirmation has been received from the Council that the new street lights will be in accordance with the agreement reached several months ago, i.e. lanterns will be replaced on a one for one basis and replacement standards will be of the Heritage style.

2014/7492 CYCLE EVENTS DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett advised the Court that following Mr Brian Tarnoff's Presentment in which he expressed concern that a particular cycle event would clash with a drift, a lot of work has been undertaken to ensure that conflicts between cycle events and drifts are avoided. The Safety Advisory Group was pro-active in ensuring that the event mentioned by Mr Tarnoff did not clash with a drift and Mr Dowsett and the Clerk spent a significant amount of time searching the internet in an effort to identify any other potential conflicts and seek the co-operation of cycle event organisers to ensure there are none.

A similar exercise will probably have to be undertaken next year, but it is hoped that in time the majority of recreational event organisers will make use of the Safety Advisory Group's online calendar so as to avoid any conflicts, not only with drifts, but also with other events.

Action in
2015
BD/Clerk

2014/7493 WELFARE TOUR RESUME
December

The Welfare Tour will be held on Friday 5th December 2014. The invitations will be sent out shortly.

2014/7494 COMMUNITY ROUTES DISCHARGE

The email from the National Park Authority was circulated to members of the Court. The Clerk was requested to advise the National Park that it wishes to be consulted on all works proposed on the common lands of the New Forest. The work on the three routes identified in the email will be undertaken by the Forestry Commission and it is expected that consultation will therefore be undertaken in the usual way.

Action
Clerk

2014/7495 LYN DHURST TO ASHURST CYCLE WAY (A35) DISCHARGE

This land is subject to Common Rights and is therefore within the remit of the Court.

It is believed that consideration is being given to seeking consent to tarmac this cycleway in order to make it more attractive to cyclists and to reduce ongoing maintenance and the associated cost. The Court is opposed to the tarmacking of this route.

Mrs Westerhoff suggested that perhaps suitable mitigation could be investigated, such as returning to the open Forest areas of verge elsewhere. The Court was happy to give further consideration to any proposals which may be brought forward. Mrs Westerhoff said she will liaise with Hampshire County Highway Authority and Natural England and come back to the Court when she has something further to report.

Action
DW

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME (HLS)

2014/7496 HLS BOARD MEETING DISCHARGE

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 1st October 2014

VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME (VGS)

2014/7497 VGS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE DISCHARGE

The VGS Management Committee is due to meet on Wednesday 8th October.

MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2014/7498 ACCESS FORUM DISCHARGE

Amongst many other subjects handled by the New Forest Access Forum, a special sub-group met to comment on the Hampshire CC cycling consultation paper. Mr Mills had been able to ensure that the Verderers' interests were noted. Broadly speaking, the paper was sensible and reflected our precautionary stance on not favouring mass cycling events.

2014/7499 NEW FOREST EQUINE FORUM DISCHARGE

Miss Macnair attended a recent meeting of the Equine Forum. Amongst the topics discussed was Atypical Myopathy in equines and the result of tests carried out in the USA on 'Field Maple'. It appears that 'Field Maple' is not toxic to horses but Sycamore most certainly is. The Court agreed that the Forestry Commission should be encouraged to remove Sycamore from the Forest.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

2014/7500 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR JULY & AUGUST 2014 RESUME

The financial statements were noted.

STAFF MATTERS

2014/7501 NEW BASIC PAYMENTS SCHEME AND THE NATIONAL RESERVE DISCHARGE

Some commoners who have bought common entitlement under the present Single Payment Scheme have complained that others may be able to obtain it for nothing if a well intentioned proposal to open up the National Reserve is implemented. Additionally, local land owners who have previously shown no interest in commoning could be able to benefit from entitlements to the detriment of the Forest and to bone-fide New Forest commoners. Concern has also been expressed that the number of animals turned out onto the Forest may increase. During the discussion it became apparent that a letter written by the Official Verderer to Defra concerning the new Basic Payments Scheme has been misunderstood. When the Official Verderer explained in more detail what he had proposed in his letter, members of the Court accepted that the intention is to try to assist bone-fide commoners who missed out last time because they were not turning out during the reference year. It was decided to circulate a copy of the Letter to all Verderers and Agisters.

Action
Clerk

HEALTH & SAFETY & TRAINING

2014/7502 NEW SMARTPHONES DISCHARGE

The Verderers' staff have been issued with new smartphones. A suitable locator 'app' to improve health and safety when employees are working alone has been identified and will be made available to the Agisters.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2014/7503 WATERS GREEN FOOTPATH DISCHARGE

A planning application for the new footpath, for which the Court recently gave consent, has been submitted. The planning application will, however, be double checked as there was a suggestion that what was agreed may have been modified.

Action
OV

- 2014/7504 RINGING OF PIGS DISCHARGE
- The Clerk recently received a letter from a local veterinary surgeon who was asked by a commoner to ring her pigs. The vet is unhappy with pig ringing and asked the Court to consider amending its byelaws so that ringing is no longer required. With the help of Mr Deakin, the Clerk wrote a suitable response explaining why it is essential that pigs are rung if they are to be turned out in the New Forest.
- 2014/7505 STOCK NUMBERS RESUME
- Mr Maton expressed concern that the number of stock on the Forest is too high. Other members of the Court were in agreement. It is felt that the numbers may result in a problem in the event of a hard winter. It was agreed that the VGS Management Committee should discuss this matter further. Action
OV
- 2014/7506 CATTLE ON BLACKHILL DISCHARGE
- Mr Gerrelli said there is significant erosion of the road edges on the Blackhill Road, probably caused by cattle from a nearby holding.
- The land belongs to the National Trust which has worked to alleviate the problem in the past. Action
Clerk
- 2014/7507 BALMER LAWN EROSION RESUME
- Mr Gerrelli also pointed out that there is significant erosion at Balmer Lawn 'Beach'. It was agreed this matter should be resumed for discussion in October when the Forestry Commission is present.
- 2014/7508 THE AGISTER TEAM DISCHARGE
- Mr Readhead asked if there are contingency plans in the event that a second Agister becomes unfit or is unavailable for work.
- In response it was pointed out that Mr John Adams has a humane killer and can be called upon in an emergency. In addition the New Forest Keepers have always made themselves available to assist should an emergency arise. The fact that many of the drifts have had to be cancelled because of strangles has to some extent reduced the Agister Teams workload.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 13:42 hrs.

Domestic Mary
Official Verderer
15th October 2014