

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 16th April 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 (to 7226)

APOLOGIES: None

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2014/7220 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 19th March 2014 required two minor amendments. The Court was otherwise happy with the minutes and agreed the Official Verderer should sign them after the meeting once the changes had been made.

2014/7221 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

The Official Verderer and the Elected Verderers and Mr Stride, co-opted Verderer 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.

Mr Maton reminded the Court that he is a Forestry Commission contractor, and that he is involved with a tender to re-fence Longmeadow (2014/7179).

Mr Stride advised the Court that he has retired from the Forestry Commission.

2014/7222 CONDITION OF STOCK

RESUME

The Head Agister reported that overall the stock is in very good condition. The animals have wintered well and whilst the weather has been wet, it has also been mild. The recent dry mild weather has also helped. Very few animals are having to be removed and they are mostly older mares and young ponies.

Worms – Miss Macnair remarked that in view of the mild winter she felt there could be a problem with worms this year. The Head Agister replied saying that studies in the past indicated that some ponies will suffer from the effects of worms whilst others won't. Some seem to have a natural immunity. However, young ponies often benefit from worming but this is up to the individual commoner. Mr Stride remarked that he has some ponies that have never been wormed and are always fat.

Mr Deakin commented that he has seen one or two poor looking cattle. It was agreed that at this time of year some cattle stop coming home to be fed and that commoners do generally ease back on feeding. However, the grass on the Forest is not growing yet and is generally not expected to grow until late May/early June. Meanwhile the Agisters will of course monitor all stock on the Forest and take action where necessary.

2014/7223 STRANGLES

RESUME

The strangles outbreak continues. It was originally found on Bolton's Bench, Lyndhurst Racecourse, Matley and Pilley. It has now spread to Balmer Lawn and Black Knoll. It is mainly young ponies which are affected.

2014/7224 STOCK LOSING CONDITION AND REMOVED FROM THE FOREST

RESUME

Mares – 4
Fillies – 13
Geldings – 2
Donkeys – 2

The total removed last month was 29 compared with 70 in the same period last year.

The year to date figure is 122. In 2013 it was 243.

2014/7225 MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE

RESUME

	Forest	Common	Total
Ponies	4178	589	4767
Cattle	1557	882	2439
Donkeys	94	59	153
Pigs	0	23	23
Sheep	0	142	142
Total	5829	1695	7524

Ponies, cattle and donkeys on the Forest – 5829
Ponies, cattle and donkeys on the Common – 1530
Total Ponies, Cattle and Donkeys – 7359

2014/7226 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT

DISCHARGE

Three commoners have yet to pay their marking fees. One is a member of the Verderers' Grazing Scheme and he will therefore not receive any payment from the scheme this year. The other two are expected to pay shortly.

The Head Agister left the meeting

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mike Seddon, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest
Mr Mark Street, Area Land Agent (New Forest)
Miss Melissa Jones, Assistant Land Agent (New Forest)

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2014/7227 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR MARCH 2014

I am pleased to report that once more the number of accidents is down on last year. The Agisters attended 8 accidents in March compared with 12 in March last year.

The total number of animals killed and injured at the end of March 2014 is 15, compared with 27 in the same period last year.

3 ponies and a cow had to be destroyed after being involved in collisions.

1 donkey was uninjured and 3 ponies which were reportedly involved in accidents, could not be found.

All 8 accidents happened in the dark.

6 of the vehicles involved were cars or light commercials. The remaining 2 accidents were not reported. 3 of the motorists are known to be local.

March's accidents are as follows,

Hatchet Pond, 4th March – dark chestnut pony not found. Driver from Dibden Purlieu.

Woods Corner, Burley, 4th March – pony, colour unknown, not found. Driver from North Baddesley.

Near Ipers Bridge, also 4th March – the cow that died in the hit and run which I mentioned at the March Court. The driver has unfortunately still not been identified.

Grigg Lane, Brockenhurst, 6th March – pony not found, again colour unknown. Driver from Lyndhurst.

Roundhill, Brook, 7th March – brown donkey uninjured. Driver from Alderholt.

Hilltop, near the Royal Oak Pub, 13th March – bay two year old filly injured and destroyed. Driver from Hythe.

Burley Road, South Weirs, 15th March – dun mare injured and destroyed. Hit and Run. No driver found – yet.

Wootton B3058, 28th March – chestnut mare injured and destroyed. Driver from Westbury on Trym, Bristol.

So far in April there have been five accidents. A Charolais heifer was injured at Norleywood Crossroads on the 2nd April just before 9.00 a.m.. The driver came from Southampton.

Two young cattle died at Pondhead. A heifer and a steer. These two animals were part of the same herd and ran together. The 10 month old heifer was hit by two cars at twenty past eight in the evening on the 3rd April. She had to be destroyed by Agister Mike Lovell. The drivers reported the accident. One was from Eastleigh and the other from Lyndhurst.

The following morning, 4th April, at 9.30 a.m., another 10 month old animal, a steer, was reported as being lame. He was at the same location as the previous evening's accident. Agister Robert Maton attended and found the animal with a broken leg. Obviously that animal also had to be humanely destroyed. We felt that this animal may well have been involved in the accident the night before but the two drivers who hit the heifer have told Police that they only hit one animal. We have therefore, logged this second accident as a hit and run. It is of course possible that the animal could have been hanging around his dead companion and was hit by a vehicle later in the night, but that is of course a matter of conjecture and unfortunately we may never know the answer .

On the 6th April at ten past eight in the evening a grey pony was injured in a collision in Hatchet Lane, Beaulieu. The driver came from Hythe.

Lastly, on the 10th April, between the Rising Sun public house and Wootton Bridge, a brown pony was left with a broken leg following an accident involving a driver from Hordle. This accident occurred at 11 pm.

In January's Court, I reported that someone had been leaving carrots on the verge of the B3078 and that subsequently, more carrots were found at Picket Post. I am pleased to say that there has not been a repeat of this.

PRESENTMENTS

2014/7228 BASALT HOGGIN
Presentment by Mr Brian Tarnoff Chairman, Land Management Committee, the New Forest Association

In 2009 the Forestry Commission installed a basalt grit based replacement to the current hoggin material as a car park surface at Longslade Bottom, Yew Tree Bottom, Wilverley and 7 others sites, ostensibly on a trial basis. In September 2009 the NFA made a Presentment requesting that Verderers ask the Forestry Commission and Natural England for details of the monitoring procedures in place to observe and measure this trial, and what plans existed for removal should the material prove inappropriate. Untested material could lead to unwelcome enrichment of the forest soil. A darker surface may store and reflect more heat which could also impact the habitat and landscape.

The Forestry Commission now have plans to use this material on a further 10 car parks. They have stated that Natural England has said that the basalt is chemically inert, and that because of this they are under no obligation to further test. This falls below Natural England's previous standards of testing the impact on the ground. In their favour, the Forestry Commission have suggested that they may seek a report from an independent ecologist to spot check the existing sites for signs of negative impact before any further roll out.

The long term aesthetic impact on the landscape of a darker material should be considered as well. The Landscape Action Plan recently adopted by the New Forest National Park Authority recognizes the importance of integrating recreational access within the landscape and recommends a "low key" approach and specifically calls for "Use of materials sensitive to landscape context, e.g. hoggin, light coloured crushed stone". [http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/info/20096/unspoilt_landscape/275/landscape_action_plan].

The current hoggin blends with the colour of forest soil. If any of these original car parks is decommissioned, there is very little to do to return the space to the Forest. Use of this new material would require costly removal in this instance.

We appreciate that the Forestry Commission must seek to reduce maintenance costs and use more effective and sustainable materials for car park surfacing. However, it would be an unfortunate investment in the nearly fifty year old network of forest car parks, an outdated infrastructure in dire need of review for future recreational management of the forest.

We ask the Verderers to hold the Forestry Commission to their proposed environmental testing of the trial sites. We also ask the Verderers to join the NFA in pressing the Forestry Commission and the National Park to review the car parking provision under the Recreation Management Strategy, which, so far, has yielded few practical outcomes. Finally, we hope that the Forestry Commission will refrain from further investment in this material for use on the Forest until these concerns are addressed.

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2014/7229 CAR PARK MAINTENANCE - BASALT HOGGIN DISCHARGE

A discussion took place on the merits of using basalt hoggin for car park maintenance. It was originally used in 2009 with approval from Natural England as the material is chemically inert and was, therefore, not considered to be harmful to the Forest. At the time, the Court also raised no objection. Locally-sourced gravel does not bind together as well as basalt and as a result car parks surfaced with gravel have to be repaired more often, resulting in additional cost to the Forestry Commission.

The basalt is a different colour, however it has been found that the colour lightens over time. This is evident in all the car parks where basalt has been used, with the exception of Longslade Bottom where a finer size stone was originally used which led to a more engineered, dark finish. The finer stone is no longer used.

The Deputy Surveyor advised the Court that the Forestry Commission may in future wish to use basalt on additional car parks, and he is fully aware of the need to consult first.

The NFA has suggested that vegetation will not re-colonise on basalt in the same way as it does on gravel. However there is no data to indicate that is the case, and the issue is not relevant because it is not the intention to re-colonise the car parks with vegetation.

The Deputy Surveyor said a small scale study by an ecologist may be undertaken to see whether there have been any changes in vegetation around the car parks where basalt has been used.

It was queried whether the basalt comes from outside the New Forest, as generally only locally sourced material is permitted by Natural England on the Forest, e.g. highway repairs. The Deputy Surveyor responded that basalt comes from the Mendips but being inert it was considered acceptable by Natural England.

Mr Readhead remarked that the highway authority is only allowed to use locally sourced gravel for repairs. He had recently been invited to watch a new method of repairing potholes but he had noted that nothing was being done as part of those operations to repair the road haunches. Mr Readhead requested a copy of the single page document on road repairs that was recently drawn up by Hampshire County Highways and agreed by the Forestry Commission and the Verderers. It is thought the type of gravel that can be used for haunch repairs is stipulated in that document. The Clerk will provide a copy.

Action
Clerk

The Deputy Surveyor also said that although the National Park's Recreation Management Strategy calls for a review of car parking in the Forest, there is currently no such review and even if one starts it is unlikely to conclude swiftly. A number of members of the Court remembered the last review which took place in 1996 and no-one felt it is necessary to review the provision of car parking in the Forest at the moment. In the meantime the Deputy Surveyor reminded the Court of the ongoing need to maintain the car parks.

Mr Maton commented that there are ongoing issues with verge parking at Ipley near the river, to which the Deputy Surveyor responded, saying that the Forestry Commission does try to prevent verge parking.

NEW SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2014/7230 BRAMSHAW VILLAGE SIGNS

RESUME

A request was received via the Forestry Commission for some replacement signs at Bramshaw and Brook.

All the Forest authorities are keen to avoid the proliferation of signage and members of the Court requested the item be resumed for next month, in order to give them an opportunity to inspect the sites of the proposed new signs.

It was agreed that the Parish Councils should also be asked to provide evidence of the locations of the old signs.

Action
MSt/MJ

Concern was expressed that consenting to these signs may result in numerous other requests from other parishes within the Forest and it is important that a precedent is not set.

It was also pointed out that the Verderers have previously favoured plain signs with place names only, and objected to logos (e.g. the appalling dog fouling image which was included on some road signs a few years ago).

Action
Clerk

The National Park Authority will also be asked to provide a copy of its policy on signage.

Action
Clerk

Mr Dowsett suggested that efforts should be made to tidy up the signage at the junction of the B3078/B3079 before any further signs are agreed.

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

2014/7231 FINANCIAL LIABILITY FOR BREACHES OF HLS CROSS COMPLIANCE CONDITIONS RESUME

The report from the RPA is still awaited. The Court was pleased to hear that Burley Golf Club has undertaken further work to reduce the paraphernalia on its course following an audit which was carried out recently.

2014/7232 LAND AT SANDY DOWN DISCHARGE

The land on the west side of the A337, south of Brockenhurst, is free of common rights, it having been the subject of a land exchange in 1981. The land which came back to the Forest was some Crown Freehold at Ashley Lodge.

The area at Sandy Down is however part of the SSSI and is managed by the Forestry Commission. The Court decided that regrettably it is not practical to pursue the suggestion that the land be returned to grazing for various reasons including the need to provide accesses to several properties and also to fence against the A337. The burden of future liability for fencing and gridding was felt to outweigh the benefit of grazing what is not a particularly large area (12.3 acres).

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2014/7233 REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE LIST (FORMERLY THE SNAGGING LIST) RESUME

There are no updates on the list.

2014/7234 FLOODED LAWN AT QUEEN'S MEADOW RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor said no action has been taken during the winter and he asked that it be resumed at the May Court. By then he hopes to have some proposals for discussion.

Action
DS

2014/7235 DROP IN EVENT – GODSHILL PARISH HALL DISCHARGE

This event is intended to provide information to the public on the scope (topics to be studied) of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) that is due to be carried out at Latchmore. The event on 29th April runs from 4.00 p.m. until 8.00 p.m. and will be staffed by the Forestry Commission and its consultants.

ENCROACHMENTS

2014/7236 ENCROACHMENT LIST RESUME

A updated list was circulated.

2014/7237 **KINGS COPSE DITCH / STAGGS BARN – BLACKFIELD** **RESUME**

Regrettably the Police have declined to hold the criminal damage case open in respect of this issue. The Clerk was asked to contact the local County Watch Sergeant to ask if this decision can be reconsidered. Failing that, the Official Verderer will write to the Chief Inspector Tony Rowlinson, New Forest District Commander. **Action Clerk**

2014/7238 **FENCE OUTSIDE PROPERTY AT EAST BOLDRE** **DISCHARGE**

It was reported that there is a further encroachment caused by a fence that has been erected outside a property boundary in East End. Mr Street said the Forestry Commission is dealing with it and if it is not resolved, it will be added to the encroachment list.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2014/7239 **ROAD SIGNAGE – CDA'S PROPOSED TRIAL FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF A PROGRESSIVE SIGNAGE PROGRAMME AT AN ANIMAL ACCIDENT BLACKSPOT, ON THE B3078** **RESUME**

Mr Richard Deacon for the CDA has now submitted a draft proposal following his presentment at the November Court. The Court considered the details and in principle agree with a year's trial of marker posts. The Verderers are very keen not to see a proliferation of signs in the Forest, so it was suggested that the signs should be re-considered. There is also no detail about the end-date of the trial, and also no commitment to remove the marker posts. Mr Deacon will also be asked to make a Presentment with the full details of his final proposal. **Action Clerk**

2014/7240 **APPLESLADE POUND – DAMAGE TO GATES** **DISCHARGE**

Unfortunately during recent work to remove dangerous trees carried out at the request of the Agisters two pound gates were damaged by the Forestry Commission staff undertaking the work. The Deputy Surveyor agreed to replace 1 x 10' gate and 1 x 6' gate. **Action DS/RD**

2014/7241 **FALLEN WOOD** **RESUME**

The Verderers' Staff Committee remains very concerned about the quantity of fallen timber in the Forest as well as the number of dangerous trees. The problems have been exacerbated by last winter's storms in which a huge amount of timber came down.

Two main issues require attention:-

Firstly, whether the present level of fallen timber is right for the Forest.

Secondly, the hazard to stock posed by the heads of some fallen trees, damage to lawns and problems with access for stock management. In some instances animals may become trapped. In other places lawns are being damaged and access to pounds has been seriously hampered.

In response, the Deputy Surveyor said that a practical approach is needed. To this end, Jane Smith (Forestry Commission) will be asked to set up a meeting out on the Forest, to be attended by representatives of the Forestry Commission, Natural England (possibly Diana Westerhoff)

and other members of the Court, including Mr Richard Stride. This meeting would look at some representative Ancient and Ornamental Woodlands to consider whether there is adequate or excessive deadwood now present.

The Deputy Surveyor commented that the Forestry Commission is endeavouring to remove windblown timber on lawns or tracks by way of firewood sales in line with usual practice, but it is a huge task that cannot be resolved easily or quickly. He said the Forestry Commission will do its best to prioritise the work that is required but no timescales are available at the moment.

Mr Stride commented that he felt the fuel wood sales policy is not evenly applied by the Keepers. He said a more even application of the policy would be welcome.

Mrs Westerhoff suggested that a review of fallen wood should be incorporated into a review of the SAC plan.

Miss Macnair expressed the view that there are now too many leaves in the pasture woodlands and that this is a result of there being too few earthworms which in turn is due to too many badgers. The Deputy Surveyor said the Forestry Commission does not cull badgers which are a protected species.

2014/7242 A31 FENCE

DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer and the Clerk met with representatives of the Highways Agency and EM Highways to discuss the A31 fence.

At the meeting both representatives seemed to be receptive to the idea of getting the fence upgraded to post and rail albeit that it won't be possible immediately.

The Official Verderer strongly advised that a more robust inspection system is required and he offered the services of an Agister to take the Highway Engineers along the Forest side of the fence in order to inspect it in detail. Such an inspection took place today. Agister Peter Rix has suggested that to aid inspection, a trace should be cut along as much of the fenceline as possible, on the Forest side. The Court was in agreement with the suggestion.

The Deputy Surveyor said that if the Highways Agency or its contractor wishes the Forestry Commission to clear vegetation to enable fence maintenance they will need to submit a proposal for consideration. The work will have to be paid for by the Highways Agency or its contractor as such work is not considered to be Forest maintenance.

2014/7243 PONIES IN INCLOSURES

DISCHARGE

The Staff Committee is very concerned at the condition of some inclosure fences which is resulting in Forest stock gaining easy access to the inclosures. The Deputy Surveyor said the situation was made very much worse by the bad winter and that repairs are ongoing.

- 2014/7244 HAMPTON RIDGE – SUBMARINE PENS (CONCRETE TARGET AT DISCHARGE
ASHLEY WALK)
- Mr Dowsett said that there is an interesting video on the BBC South Today website on the restoration and survey work that is being undertaken on this site. He suggested members of the Court may like to watch it at the end of the meeting.
- 2014/7245 FALLEN TREE AT HURST HILL DISCHARGE
- Mr Deakin asked if the tree which has fallen across the holding pen at Hurst Hill could please be cleared as a priority. The pound is well used at this time of year and he was concerned that animal welfare in the area could be compromised if the pound cannot be accessed. Action
DS
- 2014/7246 VINNEY RIDGE/BLACKWATER DRIFTWAY RESUME
- Concern was expressed that there has been no headway on resolving this issue. The Deputy Surveyor said he has asked for a proposal to be drafted and he will chase it up. Action
DS
- 2014/7247 DAMAGE TO THE FOREST AT FOREST ROAD BURLEY RESUME
- Mr Street confirmed that the car free ditches will be re-dug soon. He confirmed he has been unable to find any evidence that there has ever been a formal vehicular access. Action
MSt/MJ
- 2014/7248 ELECTROCUTED PIG RESUME
- Mr Deakin advised the Court that SSE (Scottish and Southern Electricity) has explained how the unfortunate pig came to be electrocuted in a pond on Penn Common.
- The following is SSE's explanation of what happened:-
- 'Normally, if there is a fault on a piece of our equipment, the circuit feeding into it will 'trip'. This disconnects the supply, (causing a power cut) but ultimately making the piece of equipment safe. All our equipment that is mounted on a pole (transformers, switches etc) has an earth wire running down it, were it is connected to 'earth pins' within the ground, (called an earth mat) that then radiate away from the pole over a reasonable distance. This allows any fault on our equipment that 'shorts' to 'earth' to then dissipate through the path of least resistance to the ground, and by virtue of this, causing the 'feeding in' circuit to trip.*
- The problem we discovered at 'Marsh Farm' transformer, was that the earth mat had been stolen, (each mat potentially contains a lot of copper, highly attractive to certain types of people.....due to its monetary value). Because of this, there was no longer a low resistance path to earth. When the pig came along, standing with her rear legs at the base of the pole, and leant forward to take a drink from the pond, being that the pond is at 0 volts, and 120 volts was at the base of the pole, she, unfortunately, completed the circuit which caused her unfortunate death.*
- To try and prevent this sort of occurrence, we have teams of line walkers who walk each circuit to check the integrity of the network, and report their findings. This includes all defects and if the earthing has been stolen'.*

	Mr Deakin is keen to see what lessons can be learned from this incident and the offer of a meeting made by the SSE engineer will be accepted.	Action Clerk
	From time to time, the Court is asked to consent to pole-mounted transformers and other equipment on the Forest and the Court was keen to ensure that safety procedures are in place to reduce the risk of a repeat of this incident. Mr Street remarked that there may be a need to include additional conditions in future wayleaves.	Action MSt/MJ
2014/7249	CONTROLLED BURNING	DISCHARGE
	Mr Gerrelli thanked the Forestry Commission, including Mr Richard Stride, for a job very well done. The Court was unanimous in its thanks.	
2014/7250	ALUM GREEN WATER LEAK	DISCHARGE
	Mr Street said he thought the leak had been repaired. Mr Stride said he will check.	Action RS
2014/7251	ORDNANCE CLEARANCE AT MATLEY	RESUME June
	The Deputy Surveyor said he is still trying to get the MOD to come back and finish the clearance work. It was remarked that similar clearance work on the beach from Hurst to Milford-on-Sea appears to have been carried out without delay. It was suggested, however, that that may have been done by the Royal Navy, whereas Matley seems to be the responsibility of the Army!	Action DS
2014/7252	AREA LAND AGENT	DISCHARGE
	Mr Street advised the Court that he has been promoted to Head of Estates for Forestry Commission England. Miss Melissa Jones will be the point of contact until a replacement is in post.	
	The Court expressed their sorrow at Mr Street's forthcoming departure from the New Forest, but wished him every success in his new post.	
	The Official Verderer said Mr Street has been extremely good for the Forest, especially in respect of dealing with encroachments, and he hoped his successor will be as diligent.	

The Deputy Surveyor, Mr Street and Miss Jones left the meeting

OTHER MATTERS ARISING

2014/7253	ENCROACHMENT AT HUCKLESBROOK, FURZE HILL	DISCHARGE
	A quantity of spoil has been dumped by the new owner of some land which he recently purchased from Somerley Estate. The land is subject to common rights. It is understood that some fencing may also have been erected. Mr Deakin advised the Court that the New Forest Commoners' Defence Association is pursuing the matter.	

- 2014/7254 INDEX OF COURT MINUTES RESUME
June
- The Clerk reported that the index is coming along well.
- 2014/7255 LONG MEADOW, NEW PARK AND THE BLOODLINES SCHEME DISCHARGE
- Mr Deakin reported that work on the Long Meadow fence will commence shortly. There are some issues with the fencing around the former stallion fields in New Park, which we may wish to use for the Bloodline Scheme mares. Mr Deakin said he will discuss what can be done to improve it with Mr Denis Dooley at the New Forest Show Society.
- Mr Gerrelli said that he wonders whether re-running the Bloodline Scheme is desirable as he believes there may be a larger than usual number of colts coming forward for inspection this year. The Court understood Mr Gerrelli's reservations, however, the inspection is only a few weeks away (3rd May) and it is unlikely that the Bloodline Scheme's mare and stallion selection will have been finalised by then. There is also no way of knowing how many colts will pass the inspection.
- The direction of the discussion then moved to the current batch of stallions. Miss Macnair commented that the experts say that stallions should not be used for more than four years and it is essential to ensure that there is a pool of young stallions coming on. Several members of the Court feel it is time to draft out the older stallions and although such decisions are always difficult to make, it is likely that several will have to leave the Stallion Scheme this year. Discussions on the best and fairest way of achieving this will be held following the stallion inspection on the 3rd May. Miss Macnair suggested a subsidy for breaking-in stallions could be considered. It was also felt that a payment towards gelding may be offered as in the past.
- 2014/7256 A337 FENCING AT SETLEY DISCHARGE
- The Clerk reported that the County Highway Authority favours post and railing the layby where there are problems with people climbing over and through the fence.
- 2014/7257 BOVINE TB RESUME
- Mr Mills felt that the Court's proposals for controlling TB in the Forest should be sent direct to Defra rather than communicating via the National Farmers' Union. This was agreed and the Clerk will draft a letter for the Official Verderer to sign.
- Action
OV/Clerk
- The Clerk advised the Court that the NFU is in the process of arranging a meeting with Defra and the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratory Agency (AHVLA), here in the Forest, to discuss the control of TB and Defra's proposals for pre-movement testing. A derogation in respect of the latter is currently actively being sought because Defra's current proposals, the implementation of which have actually been put back several months, would be completely unworkable in the Forest.
- Miss Macnair reported on a recent meeting that she attended in London which was principally convened to discuss horse passports. However, those attending the meeting were very concerned about the lack of animal disease control in the UK.

The Clerk reported that there has been a further positive TB case in Bramshaw. She said the usual emails/letters have been sent out to cattle commoners advising them to restrict movement of cattle in and out of that area pending further instructions from AHVLA.

2014/7258 LEADER PROGRAMME MEETING REPORT DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin said he attended the meeting. Ideas are being sought for the next round of Leader funding. A sub group of the CDA has been set up to come up with suggestions. Sally Igra will submit proposals. Grants will not be available for animal husbandry schemes such as barns for housing cattle but applications in respect of wood processing, tractors or biomass loos would be acceptable!

2014/7259 TRANQUILITY MAPPING RESUME

Mr Dowsett reported that the ground truthing of the final report will be undertaken over the next few months. It was agreed that Mr Pasmore should be invited to analyse the results.

BD

2014/7260 CAP REFORM RESUME

Mr Mills forwarded a paper to the Official Verderer. There are two new conditions which will have serious negative impacts on commoning. They are...

Under the new Basic Payments Scheme, farming must be a significant part of an applicant's income and claims for less than 5ha will not be accepted.

In respect of the latter, if the RPA accepts that each livestock unit equates to 3ha of allocation, most small commoners will still be able to claim under the new CAP rules.

2014/7261 HAMPSHIRE MINERALS & WASTE – OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT IN HAMPSHIRE – EVENT ON THURSDAY 5TH JUNE 2014 RESUME
June

Mrs Westerhoff agreed to attend this event on behalf of the Court.

2014/7262 CYCLE EVENT ORGANISERS CHARTER RESUME

Mr Dowsett said the Charter is almost at the final draft stage. It is stated in the Charter that drifts take precedence over recreational activities but organisers need a way of finding out when drifts are scheduled to take place, without having to ring the Verderers' Office.

The Court agreed to Mr Dowsett's suggestion that a list of drift dates should be published on the Verderers' website without the locations. Event organisers can then contact the Clerk if they wish to run an event on a day when there is a drift in order to find out whether there is likely to be a clash.

Action
BD

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME (HLS)

2014/7263 AGM DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer thanked everyone who attended the AGM. He said it went very well with almost 80 people attending. All the lectures were very interesting, and showed the good work which is being achieved by the HLS.

2014/7264 DUAL USE RESUME

The EU has suggested that DEFRA outlaws subsidies being paid to two people using the same piece of land i.e. it would only be possible to claim for an HLS scheme OR claim for Single Farm Payment, but not both. Obviously this will have a significant impact on commoning. Efforts are being made to explain to DEFRA why it is essential that such a ruling is not applied to the New Forest.

Action
OV

VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME (VGS)

2014/7265 APPLICATION FORMS DISCHARGE

The Clerk reported that the application forms in respect of this year have been sent out.

2014/7266 CATTLE OWNERSHIP RESUME

Acceptable methods by which commoners can prove they own the cattle for which they are claiming under the VGS need to be clarified.

Action
OV

FINANCIAL MATTERS

2014/7267 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR MARCH 2014 RESUME

The financial statement was noted.

STAFF MATTERS

2014/7268 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STAFF COMMITTEE MINUTES DISCHARGE

The Clerk's Assistant, Mrs Linda Ryan, has regrettably tendered her notice for family reasons. Miss Justine Bayley has been appointed as her replacement.

HEALTH & SAFETY & TRAINING

Aside from the issue of the pig at Penn Common, which was dealt with earlier in the meeting, there were no health and safety or training issues to report or discuss.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2014/7269 BRAMSHAW GOLF CLUB DISCHARGE

Mrs Westerhoff reported that she and Mr Readhead attended a further meeting with the Golf Club and proposals are awaited.

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 16th April 2014 in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.

2014/7270	WATERSLADE FARM	DISCHARGE
	The owners are laying tarmac on the track. This is not Crown Land. Consideration will be given as to whether anything should be done.	Action SW
2014/7271	CONTROLLED BURNING	DISCHARGE
	Miss Macnair called for a much larger programme of controlled burning in order to control parasites and disease. It was felt however, that increasing the burning programme is unlikely to be feasible at present.	
2014/7272	WELFARE TOUR	RESUME
	Mr Deakin reminded members of the Court that the Welfare Tour will take place on Friday 9 th May. The Clerk requested Verderers who wish to attend to let her know in order that the catering can be arranged.	Action All
2014/7273	POACHING AT BROOK	DISCHARGE
	Mr Readhead pointed out that no cattle have been turned out at this location for the past 7 months. The poaching has been caused by ponies.	
2014/7274	HOT BRANDING	RESUME
	Mr Readhead reported on a recent meeting in the West Country. He said there remains pressure to get rid of hot branding and advances are being made as respects microchipping. However, as yet there is still no viable alternative to hot branding for semi-feral animals.	
	The Code of Practice for Hot Branding which has now been approved by Defra does require some action from the Court. Firstly, a brand specification is required – i.e. design, material and size. Secondly a list of people competent to brand must also be drawn up. The Clerk confirmed that the Head Agister is currently working on the latter.	Action JRG
	Mr Tim Morrison from the consultancy firm Scientalis, is liaising with Defra and would like to bring a Minister to the Forest to watch a hot branding demonstration. Mr Readhead has given him three drift dates to choose from.	Action DR
2014/7275	COLIN DRAPER	DISCHARGE
	The Official Verderer read a letter from Colin Draper in which he thanked the Verderers for his farewell lunch and present.	
2014/7276	STUDY OF HOMININS AT WOODGREEN	DISCHARGE
	Following a detailed description of the proposed study at Woodgreen the Court raised no objections to the proposals subject to the three usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.	Action SW

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 13:30 hrs.