

**MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 20th December 2017
at 9.30 a.m. in the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.**

PRESENT:	Lord Manners	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Mr A B Dowsett	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Mr J Greenwood	Elected Verderer
	Miss D Macnair MBE	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mr G M H Mills DL	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mr A H Pasmore	Elected Verderer
	Mr D Readhead	Elected Verderer
	Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer
APOLOGIES:	Cllr E Heron	National Park Appointed Verderer
	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mr Jonathan Gerrelli	Head Agister
	Miss Justine Bayley	Assistant Clerk to the Verderers

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2017/9650 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

The Minutes of Court held on 15th November 2017 were approved and signed.

2017/9651 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

The Official Verderer declared an interest in the Verderers' Higher Level Stewardship Agreement as tenants on his Estate benefit from the Verderers Grazing Scheme and his Estate is in Higher Level Stewardship.

Elected Verderers Mr Deakin, Mr Greenwood, Miss Macnair and Mr Readhead declared an interest in the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, Verderers Grazing Scheme and Basic Payment Scheme. Mr Pasmore declared an interest in the Basic Payment Scheme.

Mr Deakin and Mr Greenwood are members of the New Forest Commoners' Defence Association committee. Mr Deakin is also Treasurer.

Mr Deakin and Mr Readhead are Directors of the New Forest Livestock Society. He is also members of the New Forest Stallion Syndicate.

Mr Dowsett is a Forestry Commission Volunteer Ranger.

Mr Greenwood is employed part-time by Cadland Estate and therefore has an interest in the Stallion Grazing. Mr Greenwood also has a stallion of his own.

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

Mrs Westerhoff is a tenant of the Forestry Commission. Mrs Westerhoff has been formally appointed to the Board of Trustees of the New Forest Trust.

2017/9652 **CONDITION OF STOCK**

RESUME

The Head Agister said as the year draws to a close stock is in exceptionally good condition. It has been a good year for grass growth and there has been plenty of food on the Forest. The cattle are also looking very well. Many have now been removed from the Forest for the winter and the Agisters are busy assisting with TB testing and marking cattle for 2018.

The December Welfare Tour was well attended by welfare organisations with many new faces along with the regular attendees. It was a cold but bright day and the tour saw a good number of animals but many were out of sight sheltering from the cold wind. The attendees were very impressed with the condition of the animals; many said they are looking the best they have ever seen them.

The Donkey Sanctuary carried out its usual "pre welfare tour" tour of the Forest and they were very impressed with the condition of the donkeys they saw.

Mr Mills said the welfare tour was a 10/10 success. Mr Dowsett passed on thanks from his colleagues at the Forestry Commission for their invitation to the tour. He said many had no understanding of the work of the Agisters and Verderers and all had found the tour beneficial. The Official Verderer thanked the Head Agister, Mr Deakin and Mr Brian Ingram for organising the welfare tour.

Mr Deakin said the extra pony sale held by the New Forest Livestock Society on Thursday 7th December had been beneficial to the Forest. The Head Agister agreed, saying it had given the Agisters and Commoners the opportunity to catch up mares with foals that had been missed on the drifts. Mr Readhead said the Society is planning to hold a December sale in 2018.

Mr Mills asked the Head Agister if there are any current TB concerns in the Forest. The Head Agister said that testing will be ongoing until the end of January and that there have been one or two issues. Mr Greenwood mentioned that there are currently several herds around the perimeter of the Forest which are under investigation for possible reactors.

Mr Greenwood asked the Head Agister if there are any signs of ponies stripping bark in the Forest. Mrs Westerhoff said she had walked through Mark Ash and could not see any evidence of freshly barked trees. Mr Deakin said the Forestry Commission has initiated a monitoring programme. More information will be requested from the Deputy Surveyor.

2017/9653 **REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE & COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR**

RESUME

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Forest Ponies	4743	4754
Forest Cattle	4916	4255
Forest Donkeys	115	110
Forest Pigs	397	256
Forest Sheep	0	0
Total Forest Stock	10171	9375

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Common Ponies	815	762
Common Cattle	1455	1383
Common Donkeys	124	112
Common Pigs	106	120
Common Sheep	244	293
Total Common Stock	2744	2670
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	9774	9119
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	2394	2257
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	12168	11376
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	12915	12045

2017/9654 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT

RESUME

No new byelaw offences have been reported.

The Head Agister left the meeting.

Mr Bruce Rothnie, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest & Mr Paul Grugeon, Land Agent New Forest, joined the meeting.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2017/9655 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2017

The Agisters attended 24 accidents in November. This compares with 23 in November last year.

4 ponies, 1 donkey and 1 pig were killed. 3 ponies were injured and humanely destroyed. 4 ponies were injured.

3 accidents occurred in the daylight, 3 at twilight and 18 in the dark.

2 accidents in November were not reported (Hit & Run).

12 motorists are known to have been local.

The number of animals killed and injured to date is 69, compared with 79 in the same period last year.

SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2017/9656 BT OPENREACH RE-SUBMISSION IN RESPECT OF BROADBAND DISCHARGE CABINET BROCKENHURST 2 RHINEFIELD ROAD

This re-submission has been necessary following a survey which resulted in the original site for Brockenhurst 2 being deemed unsuitable.

To support the request for permission to stand Brockenhurst 2 on grazing land (Rhinefield Road), it is proposed that dragons teeth be installed at a site close to Brockenhurst 1 which is regularly encroached on by vehicle traffic. That area will be returned to grass. The proposal was suggested by the Forestry Commission.

The proposal is considered acceptable and consent is granted. However, BT Open reach must understand that land accepted in mitigation for another proposal cannot be used again in any other submission to the Court. This will be communicated to BT.

Action
PG

2017/9657 GODSHILL SPORTS CLUB LICENCE DISCHARGE

The Land Agent asked the Court for permission to renew Godshill Cricket Club's licence for a 25 year period. The Court raised no objections but felt that the permission for six benches is excessive and agreed to two benches at the front of the pavilion. Concern was raised about the possibility of football goal posts being erected on the Forest. Mr Grugeon was asked to look into whether football will be played at the club. The matter will be brought back to the Court by Mr Grugeon for final approval.

Action
PG

DE MINIMIS CONSENTS RECORDED AT THIS COURT

2017/9658 DE MINIMIS ITEMS RECORDED AT THIS COURT DISCHARGE

DM005 Switch Changes north of the A31 (SSEN)
DM012 Continuation of Stagbury SAM restoration/protection
DM013 Replacement of exposed cable at Dockens Watercourse
Moyles Court (SSEN)

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

2017/9659 RECREATIONAL PRESSURES, BYELAW ENFORCEMENT & SIGNAGE DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor gave a presentation to the Court.

2017/9660 RETURNING LAND TO OPEN FOREST AT LATCHMOOR, BROCKENHURST RESUME

Mr Deakin, Mr Greenwood and Mr Readhead attended the recent site visit to Latchmoor together with Agister Maton. There are differing views, which need to be reconciled, as respects whether the old fence at the bottom of the embankment should be retained or removed.

Action
RD

The Deputy Surveyor mentioned that Dave Morris has prepared a plan that summarises the broad views expressed at the site visit. Mr Greenwood said he has not received a copy of the plan. The Deputy Surveyor said he will ensure the Court receives a copy.

Action
DS

2017/9661 ASHURST HOSPITAL RESUME

The Official Verderer said he and the Clerk had found the relevant Acts of Parliament regarding the hospital grounds. Mr Pasmore asked for copies to be emailed to him.

Action
OV

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2017/9662 SSSI REPAIR & MAINTENANCE WORKS RECORDING SHEET RESUME

The content of the sheet was noted.

2017/9663 PONDHEAD DISCHARGE

Mr Readhead asked that the Pondhead restoration be added to the maintenance list as works have yet to be fully completed.

to
Maintenance
List

2017/9664 WHITE MOOR BOTTOM & COMMON MOOR DISCHARGE

The Proposed works at White Moor Common and Common Moor are approved.

Miss Macnair raised concerns that at Common Moor a large area of lawn has been lost at the side of the stream where the area has become too overgrown for the larger herbivores to graze. Willow below this, not above, needs clearing. There was a built up passage at Berry Knowl which is now submerged. Miss Macnair is concerned that local knowledge of how the area should look has been lost. Mrs Westerhoff said a further visit to Common Moor will be arranged after the agreed works are completed. Work is scheduled for the east side of the moor and once complete, checks will be made to ensure the area has opened up sufficiently for stock to access.

Action
DS

2017/9665 WHITTEN BOTTOM & SLAP BOTTOM DISCHARGE

The Proposed works at Whitten Bottom and Slap Bottom are approved. Mr Dowsett and Mr Pasmore will speak to the HLS team regarding the sympathetic retention of a mature pine tree.

Action
BD/AHP

ACTION LIST

2017/9666 ACTION LIST RESUME

An updated action list was provided.

2017/9667 DAMAGE TO VERGES AROUND THE ROYAL OAK FRITHAM DISCHARGE

Mr Pasmore asked that a representative of the Court be present at any meetings to discuss verge restoration in this area. It is important the Court is involved in identifying a solution.

Action
DS

ENCROACHMENTS INVOLVING THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2017/9668 ENCROACHMENTS LIST RESUME

An updated encroachment list was provided.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2017/9669 NIGHT TIME RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY – NORDIC WALKING, ASHURST DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor said he is aware of the night time walking activity at Ashurst. Mr Pasmore said the Forestry Commission should stop this kind of activity before it becomes too large to control. The Deputy Surveyor said his staff monitors social media in an attempt to identify night time activity on the Forest and have been successful in diverting some activity off the Forest. He confirmed that it is against the byelaws to park on the Forest after dusk but the costs and time involved in closing every car park are great and vandalism of barriers has been a problem in the past. The Official Verderer agreed with Mr Pasmore.

2017/9670 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCOPING MEETING DISCHARGE

Mrs Westerhoff and Mr Dowsett will be attending the EIA Scoping meeting in January 2018.

2017/9671 RESIDENTIAL ACCESS LICENCES DISCHARGE

The Land Agent told the Court that the new wording in the Access Licence text is having a beneficial effect alongside the leaflets produced by Mr Sean Marsh. Home owners are contacting the Forestry Commission before carrying out repairs to their access tracks on the Forest.

The Deputy Surveyor and the Land Agent left the meeting.

OTHER MATTERS ARISING

2017/9672 REPORT ON MEETING WITH GUY THOMPSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NATURAL ENGLAND DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer updated the Court on his recent meeting with Guy Thompson from Natural England.

2017/9673 REPORT ON MEETING WITH SIR DESMOND SWAYNE MP DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer updated the Court on his recent meeting with Sir Desmond Swayne.

2017/9674 REPORT ON MEETING WITH THE NATIONAL TRUST RE STOCK ON HALE PURLIEU DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin updated the Court following his meeting with the National Trust's Lead Ranger Lee Hulin. The Trust is in the process of developing signs to be placed in each of its car parks so visitors are informed that they will be likely to encounter Forest stock on their walks. The wording of the signs is still under discussion. Mr Dowsett hopes that the issue of stock worrying by dogs is covered by the signs. Mr Pasmore said he is disappointed that the National Trust does not speak to its Commoners.

The Head Agister has visited Hale Primary School and spoken to teachers about their concerns regarding cattle on the green outside the school.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

2017/9675 NFA/FRIENDS OF THE NEW FOREST – 'FUTURE FOR THE NEW FOREST' – EVENT ON FRIDAY 2nd FEBRUARY 2018. DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer confirmed he will be joining the Q & A panel at the event.

2017/9676 ANIMAL WELFARE ACT & THE NEW FOREST – QUERY FROM Mr BRIAN TARNOFF / NFA DISCHARGE

Mr Tarnoff's query was discussed; the Court felt no action is required.

2017/9677 REPORT FROM THE NEW FOREST FRESHWATER & RIVER RESTORATION STRATEGY & PLAN WORKSHOP RESUME
February
2018

The Official Verderer said the draft report of the consultation will be available in February 2018 and will be circulated to all Verderers.

VERDERERS' GRAZING SCHEME

2017/9678 VERDERERS' GRAZING SCHEME UPDATE (VGS) DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer said the VGS Committee met in November and a number of Small Grant Applications were approved. Mr Readhead said that Commoners are appreciative of the assistance given..

MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

2017/9679 RECREATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY ADVISORY GROUP RESUME

Mr Dowsett said that the initial findings resulting from the NPA's 'Call for Views' public consultation were discussed at the recent Advisory Group meeting. The Official Verderer said that the report will be on January's agenda.

Action
OV

2017/9680 LITTER PICKING DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett said the annual Forest Spring Clean litter pick has been scheduled for the first weekend in March 2018. Mike Eccles, President of the New Forest Commoners Defence Association is organising a CDA led litter pick in and around Blackfield and is inviting Commoners to take part. Mr Dowsett said that the Official Verderer's signature on the certificates handed out to everyone who takes part needs to be updated this year.

Miss Macnair said the response to the Parish Council led litter pick in Burley was poor.

2017/9681 NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM DISCHARGE

Mr Mills raised concerns that the New Forest Access Forum has inadequate environmental representation. He said its agenda appears to be against management on the Forest and is calling for the off road cycle network to be increased.

2017/9682 RURAL CRIME MEETING DISCHARGE

Mr Mills updated the Court on the recent Rural Crime meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Michael Lane and Police Inspector Louise Hubble.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

2017/9683 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR NOVEMBER DISCHARGE

The Financial Statement was noted.

