

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday, 16th July 2003 at 9.30 a.m. in the Library, The Queen's House, Lyndhurst.

PRESENT:	Mr O Crosthwaite Eyre	Official Verderer
	Mr J Adams	Elected Verderer & Chairman of the Staff Committee
	Mr P Frost	Countryside Agency Appointed Verderer
	Miss D Macnair	Elected Verderer
	Mr A Gerrelli	Elected Verderer
	Mrs K Heron	Appt. Hampshire County Council Planning Verderer
	Mr J Perry	Appt. DEFRA Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood	Clerk
	Mr B Ingram	Head Agister (first three items only)
APOLOGIES:	Mr N D Anderson TD	Appointed Forestry Commission Verderer
	Mr J F Kitcher	Elected Verderer

IN COMMITTEE

2003/321	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	DISCHARGE
	The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 18 th June 2003 were approved and signed.	
2003/322	ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS	DISCHARGE
	The Announcements and Decisions were approved.	
2003/323	CONDITION OF STOCK	RESUME
	The Head Agister reported that overall stock is in good condition. As usual there are a few mares with foals which could be better and these will be removed on the forthcoming drifts if they have not improved. The cattle look extremely well. There is a lot of food on the Forest this year which may be due to the weather conditions or the fact that there are fewer animals depastured.	
	The Head Agister reported that he is counting the foals and feels there are not as many as usual. In some areas there are very few, however some mares seem to have travelled in order to find the stallions.	
	It was commented that there have been more road traffic accidents than usual over the past month.	
2003/324	STRANGLES	RESUME
	The strangles outbreak is subsiding with just a few ponies still showing symptoms around Ashurst and Burley.	
2003/325	WORMING	RESUME
	The Clerk reported that a meeting has been held, attended by English Nature, the Verderers' Veterinary Surgeon and Mrs Christine Stewart who is carrying out a literature search to find out what data is already available on the effects of Moxidectin in particular on aquatic crustacea. English Nature has offered £1,000 to fund this initial work.	

If, as is hoped, a detailed study is to be carried out, additional funding will have to be obtained. Leader + will help but match funding is required. The Court was disappointed to hear that £1,000 is the maximum financial support which English Nature is prepared to offer, particularly as it is English Nature that is at present preventing the widespread use of the most useful wormers on the Forest and it has been known for some time that the proposed study is likely to prove expensive. Later in the meeting this subject was revisited and the Court agreed that it may be possible to use some of the anonymous donation to help get the studies underway when applying for Leader + funding.

2003/326 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

There were no items on the Agenda in which members of the Court needed to declare an interest.

2003/327 FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME

The latest financial statement was approved.

2003/328 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT RESUME

The Official Verderer reported that there are no new problems.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mike Seddon Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest
APOLOGIES: Mr Will Parke Area Land Agent (New Forest)

ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

2003/329 DOGS

The Court shares the Commoners' Defence Association's great concern at the continued attacks on stock by dogs. Everyone who exercises their dog on the Forest must understand the importance of ensuring that their animal is kept under control at all times. Dog owners are responsible for the behaviour and actions of their animals and the Forestry Commission and this Court are prepared to use our powers jointly to punish any owner whose dog attacks or injures stock or indeed other people.

2003/330 DECISIONS

Mr Roberts asked if responses to Presentments could be communicated directly to the person making the Presentment. Where possible, we will in future endeavour to do this, but it must be appreciated that we cannot always give an immediate answer as it is sometimes necessary to refer to other organisations for information or comment.

2003/331 AGISTERS

We had a very good response to our advertisement for a fifth Agister and we interviewed some excellent candidates. I am pleased to announce that Peter Rix was the successful applicant.

We are now advertising for a Head Agister to replace Brian Ingram who will be retiring in October after 44 years service with the Court. Applications are invited from interested persons. Naturally we will be arranging an appropriate send off for Brian nearer the time.

2003/332 VERDERERS

Both John Perry and Donald Anderson will reach the end of their terms of office as appointed Verderers this month, and sadly this is the last Court that John Perry will be attending. Donald Anderson sends his apologies as most regrettably he is unable to be here today due to a long standing prior engagement.

On behalf of all the Verderers I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank them most sincerely for the considerable amount of work that they have done for the Forest over the years that they served in office, and for their much valued contribution to the Court. We extend to them every best wish for the future.

The appointment of Mrs Patricia Thorne as a Verderer of the New Forest was announced today by Forestry Minister Ben Bradshaw.

Mrs Thorne's appointment to the Court commences on 27 July 2003 and is for three years. Mrs Thorne replaces John Perry who has served for nine years.

The Forestry Commission will be announcing who they are appointing to the Court before the end of the month.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2003/262 ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR JUNE 2003

Total Accidents for the Period: 15 (7)

	Killed		Collar		Injured		Collar		Uninjured		Collar		Not Found	
Ponies	13	(5)	0	(1)	0	(2)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	2	(1)
Cattle	0	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)
Donkeys	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Pigs	0	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)
Sheep	0	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)	N/a	N/a	0	(0)
Totals	13	(5)	0	(1)	0	(2)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	2	(1)

TOTAL KILLED & INJURED	13	(7)
Accidents During the Hours of Darkness	7	(4)
Vehicles Involved		
Private Cars / Light Commercial	9	(6)
Motor Cycles	1	(0)
Heavy Vehicles	0	(0)
Number of Local Motorists	6	(5)
Number of Accidents Not Reported	5	(1)
Total Killed and Injured for the Year to date	40	(36)

Number of Deer Killed (3)

Figures in brackets () show previous year's totals.

PRESENTMENTS BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR OF THE NEW FOREST

2003/333 DOGS

"May I take this opportunity to support the announcement made by the Official Verderer in respect to dogs out of control on the Forest

The actions of a majority of dog owners and their dogs are responsible, but as with many things, the behaviour of a minority can bring the activity into disrepute.

The Forestry Commission asks for the co-operation of all dog owners in keeping their dogs under close control at all times to the benefit of the Forest's environment and stock".

PRESENTMENTS

2003/334 SMILER OF SHEEPWASH
Presentment by Mr Michael A Cooper, Practising Commoner

"As some of you are already aware, on Thursday 3rd July, an accident involving two ponies occurred on the section of road between Applemore roundabout and Ipley Crossroads. As a result a mare died at the scene. The stallion, Smiler of Sheepwash, a seventeen year old, suffered a fractured shoulder and later also had to be put down. This stallion was well known to most of us and indeed had a fan club.

I am concerned about the circumstances surrounding this accident, as it occurred at 10.30a.m. in the morning on a clear road, with no roadside obstructions. The weather was fine and bright. However, it grieves me to learn that the Police have no intention of prosecuting the driver, or indeed are not even contemplating proceedings against him. The owners of the ponies have been advised that as there were no witnesses, it would not be possible.

I would argue that had this been two pedestrians, then the road would have been closed for most of the day, and an accident investigation team sent to the scene.

Several Associations will be paying tribute to Smiler at the New Forest Show and I would ask this Court to write to the Chief Superintendent of the New Forest and request an explanation as to their reasons for not looking more closely at the circumstances surrounding the accident.

We are asked to improve the breeding stock out on the Forest, but what incentive do we have, when we are given no support as some of our best stock is killed in such a careless and inconsiderate manner".

2003/335 DOGS
Presentment by Mr John Allsopp, Vice Chairman of the New Forest Dog Owners Group

Mr Allsopp's Presentment stressed that members of NFDog were deeply shocked at the death of a foal following an attack by a dog which was clearly out of control. He went on to say that the Group promotes responsible dog ownership and referred to, and read aloud, the Dog Owners Code which was drawn up in consultation with the Forestry Commission. He added that the Code is intended to make dog owners more aware of their responsibilities and educate them into taking extra care when exercising dogs near stock or wildlife. The Group wishes to publicise the Code more widely and asked for the Court to give its support.

The Official Verderer responded by saying that the Dog Group's Presentment was very welcome, particularly in light of the incident when the foal was savaged.

2003/336 HIGHLAND WATER – RESTORATION PROPOSALS
Presentment by Mr Bob Cooper, Commoner from Minstead

Mr Cooper announced that there was a meeting of the Minstead Manor Commoners on the day following the Court concerning the restoration proposals for Highland Water. He expressed concern that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not planned.

2003/337 MR COOPER'S DUNG HEAP

Mr Cooper announced that he has increased the size of his dung heap and challenges the bureaucrats to prosecute him. He then referred to their continued support for the unlawful fencing of common land and commented that no doubt the Court would note this appalling misdemeanour.

2003/338 FOREST STALLION INSPECTIONS

Presentment by Mr Mike Eccles of the New Forest Commoners' Defence Association

"At this year's stallion passing at Beaulieu Road it became vary apparent that the selection of stallions to run on the Forest has been effectively taken out of the Verderers' control. In particular the inspection of young stallions was being carried out by the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society prior to the Verderers' own inspection.

It is the Association's opinion that we should return to the selection scheme which served the commoners fairly in the past; namely three elected Verderers, one member from the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society and one member selected from the Commoners' Defence Association.

The Association's Committee feels that only with a strong Verderers' Court which is not undermined by other bodies interfering with their authority and decision making powers can we ensure the long term of this Court which has for so long served the Forest well".

Mr Eccles went on to congratulate Mrs Pat Thorne on her appointment as the DEFRA Verderer and he then wished the Official Verderer a happy ??th birthday!

2003/339 RAGWORT PULLING

Presentment by Mr Mike Cooper

Mr Cooper thanked the Forestry Commission for its excellent efforts in pulling ragwort this year but asked that the bags into which it is put be picked up quicker as ponies had been seen opening the bags and strewing their contents along the roadside.

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

The Official Verderer welcomed Monsieur Phillipe Ghesquier from the Office National des Foret in Fontainbleau. Monsieur Ghesquier is studying how the Forestry Commission interacts with external bodies such as the Verderers. He is shadowing Mr Mike Seddon and will observe only.

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2003/340 SMILER OF SHEEPWASH

RESUME

It has been alleged that the driver of the van which killed the two ponies may have been using his mobile telephone at the time of the collision. The Clerk was asked to write to the police with this piece of information and to enquire whether prosecution is being considered.

2003/341 DOGS

RESUME

The Court agreed that how to reach dog owners is a problem. A suggestion that the Forestry Commission's byelaws be amended to come in line with the CROW Act which requires dogs to be on leads was rejected by several members of the Court.

It was agreed that the Dog Group be asked if the Verderers' logo could appear on their code as the Court wishes to support their work. The Code could also be put on the Verderers' website and it was suggested efforts should be made to get it published in the Bournemouth and Southampton Echos.

2003/342 HIGHLAND WATER RESTORATION PROPOSALS & THE WATER DISCHARGE
BASIN FORUM

Mr Frost said he is following the proposals with great interest. A public meeting was held recently to show people what is envisaged.

There are two Verderers on the Forum, Mr Kitcher and Mr Frost. Both will report back to the Court.

A little bit of work is due to be done at Highland Water to replace the meanders in the river which have, over the years, been straightened out.

Mr Frost said he is fairly happy that the Forum accepts that there are occasions when the Verderers approval for works is required and that proper consultation will take place. The Verderers will certainly be consulted on any proposals for works on mires on the Open Forest. The Environment Agency is running two projects. One involves the restoration of certain riverine woodlands and the other concerns flood prevention in the New Forest catchment. Mrs Heron went to an Environment Agency meeting recently in Fordingbridge and it appears that it is the flood prevention part of the works which may create the most difficulties.

2003/343 STALLION INSPECTIONS DISCHARGE

This matter appears later in the Agenda.

2003/344 RAGWORT DISCHARGE

Mr Cooper's comments were noted by the Forestry Commission and efforts will be made to clear up the sacks quicker.

2003/345 ORIENTEERING RESUME

There was nothing to add at this time.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COURTS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2003/346 CYCLING - STRATEGIC NETWORK RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor stated that the Forestry Commission is a member of the partnership looking at the proposals for a strategic cycle network because parts of the route run through the Forest. A couple of new lengths are on the Crown Lands.

The Forestry Commission supports the principle of the network but a couple of lengths require the consent of the FC and the Verderers. The detail will need to be made much clearer – such as, how will the route

be promoted, how and where will signs be required. Miss Macnair made a point about certain parts of the route through Burley.

2003/347 FENCING BEHIND THE SWAY CRICKET PITCH DISCHARGE

The fencing is again in very poor condition. The Deputy Surveyor promised to ask Mr Parke to deal with this.

2003/348 ELLINGHAM RUGBY CLUB RESUME

It is rumoured that the Club may be relocating and surrendering its lease. The Court asked that if this is so, could it please be consulted before a new license is issued as this is one of the most obtrusive recreational facilities on the Forest. A report was requested for the next Court.

The Deputy Surveyor and Monsieur Phillippe Ghesquier left the meeting.

OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COURTS

2003/349 PONY PASSPORTS RESUME

The Official Verderer reported that nothing new has been heard from DEFRA. He went on to say that an informal meeting attended by Mrs Gill Wright and Mr Sam Dovey from the Pony Society, together with Mr Jeff Kitcher from the CDA was held to air some views on the subject, particularly with respect to prices for passports.

The Pony Society has been asked to ensure that passports for holders of the Verderers' ID Certificate are not higher than for those who go direct to the Society. The Pony Breeders Council is to give consideration to this request. One question that has not yet been satisfactorily answered is whether ALL ponies will be obliged to have a VIC or is there a choice?

2003/350 NON PAYMENT OF MARKING FEES RESUME

The Official Verderer referred to his recent memo, sent to all members of the Court after the last meeting clarifying the situation. The content of the memo was agreed by Moore & Blatch. Fees from Counsel and Solicitors to take the matter to the Divisional Court have been estimated to be in the region of £9,000. Judge Babbington-Browne has now agreed that her ruling can be appealed. Moore and Blatch have prepared a skeleton argument but they have not yet been instructed to proceed to Counsel.

For the avoidance of any doubt as to the way in which the Verderers reached their decision as to how and where their byelaws should be enforced, the Official Verderer proposed the following resolution:-

"That the following be confirmed for the benefit of the Minutes of the Court as a record of how the Court of Verderers received legal advice, and thereby reached their decision, as to how and where to prosecute persons for breach of their byelaws:

1. Paul Morgan QC was instructed to condense his written opinion of 26th July 2002, and the subsequent advice he gave in Conference in London on 27th September 2002, into a single statement.

2. The Statement was drafted and signed by Leading Counsel.
3. The Statement was presented to the Court in Committee on the 21st October 2002 and was approved as Court policy, and it was agreed that the Statement should form part of the Announcements and Decision to be read out by the Official Verderer in Open Court that day.
4. Accordingly, the Verderers were all fully aware of Counsel's unequivocal advice that they could prosecute their byelaws in the Magistrates Court.
5. The Official Verderer has keep the Court fully informed of the costs of the prosecutions, and the Court has given its approval for all expenditure to date, and for the ongoing action in the High Court, as shown in the Court Minutes.

A further short discussion then ensued, during which concern was expressed that a member of the public who is legally qualified, Mr Norman Rudd, has claimed that his understanding of the Opinion is that Counsel did not advise the Court to use the Magistrates Court. However, in view of the statement, prepared by Counsel and read out in Open Court as explained above, members of the Court disagreed with this viewpoint. The Official Verderer then proposed the Resolution as set out above be adopted. Mr Pasmore seconded the proposal and the remaining 5 Verderers showed they were in favour. The Resolution was, therefore, passed unanimously.

Later in the meeting, Mr Frost requested a copy of Counsel's Opinion.

2003/351 SHEEP & GOATS

RESUME
November
2003

A response has at last been received from the National Trust, which reads as follows:-

"I am writing in follow up to telephone conversations we have had regarding sheep and goats on the Northern Commons. Due to the sensitive situation at present the Trust feels it would need to consult with those who have common rights before agreeing to the level of marking fees. It would seem a very fair and equitable proposal from the Trust's point of view and in truth will only effect a very small minority, who turn out sheep at present. The situation regarding goats is that at present goats are not turned out on the commons, although there are probably allowed to be and indeed have been in the past. I would suggest the same marking (fee) should apply. Again we would need to consult. With this in mind and considering the recent court case over by-laws, could you advise us on the current situation? I am sorry for the delay in replying but this is a somewhat difficult matter considering events over the past few months. Phil Marshall, The National Trust".

In view of this equivocal response, the Court decided to leave matters concerning goats and sheep until the Court cases are settled. The issue can be re-visited at a future date.

2003/352 REVIEW OF THE VERDERERS' BYELAWS RESUME

The Official Verderer will write again to DEFRA during August.

2003/353 PENSIONS DISCHARGE

Full details of the advisory service available from Numerica have now been received. In view of the problems experienced with Peninsula, Mrs Kathy Heron quite reasonably asked for confirmation of Numerica's expertise in this field. After some discussion, in which it was felt that Numerica had the necessary credentials, the Court agreed that the Official Verderer and the Clerk should make the final decision. If any additional costs, over and above those already quoted, are likely, then the matter will be brought back to the full Court for further consideration.

2003/354 THE AGISTER TEAM DISCHARGE

It was confirmed that Mr Peter Rix has been selected for the position of fifth Agister. The Court agreed he is not required to complete a probationary period and he will be invited to join the pension scheme without delay.

2003/355 BEAULIEU ROAD HOTEL RESUME

At the last Court, Mr Pasmore was asked to give some thought as to how to proceed in respect of the Beaulieu Road Hotel. His recommendation is now as follows:-

"That the Court should seek to negotiate a settlement with the hotel reflecting the strength of the Verderers' negotiating position on behalf of the commoners and the public; that we should take professional advice relating to values and the costs of insurance and that a sum not exceeding £1,000 should be allocated from the Railway money for this purpose.

The Official Verderer and Mr Pasmore should be authorised to take the matter forward and if in doing so costs are likely to exceed £1,000, they will come back to the Court for approval to expend further funds. It should be made clear throughout, that the sole objective of the negotiations is to secure land for the benefit of the public and the commoners in their enjoyment of the Forest".

Mr Pasmore proposed the recommendation be accepted. This was seconded by Mr Gerrelli. With the exception of Mr Frost, the remaining members of the Court gave their approval. Mr Frost made the comment that he felt there is a risk of future development which may not be to the benefit of the public and commoners. It was explained, however, that this is a risk that already exists. Mr Frost, however, felt unable to change his mind and the matter was left with a majority but not unanimous approval.

2003/356 ANNUAL DONATION / LAND AT IBSLEY RESUME

Further discussions took place about the land in the north of the Forest that may be available rent free from Tarmac. Some money will need to be spent on a water supply, fencing and possibly a building. It was agreed that the donation money could perhaps be used to fund such

works.

The priority is for a site meeting to be held to ensure the land is in fact suitable for holding impounded stock. Mr Adams, Chairman of the Staff Committee was tasked with arranging a meeting. Those showing an interest in attending consisted of the Official Verderer, Mrs Heron, Miss Macnair, Mr Gerrelli and Mr Pasmore. The Clerk expressed an interest, along with her assistant, as for administrative reasons she felt it would be helpful to know the location and area available.

Mrs Kathy Heron was thanked for all her efforts in finding the land and consulting with the owners.

It was further agreed that some of the donation money could also be put towards worming of stock.

2003/357 THE BUDGET DISCHARGE

The Budget was completed and submitted on time. The Deputy Surveyor has not made any comment and appears to have no problems. The Court approved the Budget as presented.

2003/358 PUBLIC MEETINGS OF THE COURT RESUME
January
2004

This matter was once again Resumed. It will appear on the January 2004 Agenda.

2003/359 STALLION INSPECTIONS RESUME

Following some differences of opinion regarding the inspection and selection of Stallions to run the Forest, it was agreed to allow the Clerk to review the scheme rules. A draft will be circulated during August.

REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

2003/360 LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG) DISCHARGE

In her absence the new DEFRA Verderer, Mrs Pat Thorne, was volunteered to attend the LAG meetings as the Court's representative. It was hoped Mrs Thorne would not object!

2003/361 THE NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL RESUME

The latest report has been circulated. Mr Frost will represent the Court on the Panel for the time being until a new representative can be appointed.

STAFF MATTERS (including the Staff Committee)

2003/362 PICKET POST FENCE RESUME

The fence is now on the ground. The Clerk said a photograph has been taken of the fence and this will now be sent to Mott McDonald in the hope that they may decide to take some action. The matter will also be raised at the next Panel meeting.

2003/363 KNAVES ASH GRID NO. 37 & CHARLES LANE GRID NO. 38 DISCHARGE

Problems at both these locations have been reported to Hampshire Highways but no action appears to have been taken to date. The Office will report the defects again in the hope they will be dealt with soon.

2003/364 WATERSLADE COTTAGE DISCHARGE

The owner of this cottage also owns some of the adjacent common. The property fence has recently been moved some 2 metres outwards, taking in some land which is subject to common rights and as such constitutes an encroachment. As the land does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Verderers' Court, it was suggested that this is a matter for the Commoners' Defence Association to pursue on behalf of the Commoners.

A separate matter concerning rubbish dumped outside the property's curtilage will, however, be dealt with by way of a letter from the Verderers' Office asking the occupier to ensure waste material is disposed of properly.

2003/365 NEW HEAD AGISTER RESUME

The interview panel for the new Head Agister will consist of the Official Verderer, Mr Kitcher, Mr Frost, Mr Pasmore and the Clerk. A convenient date will be agreed shortly.

2003/366 JOB EVALUATIONS RESUME

These are underway.

2003/367 EMPLOYMENT HANDBOOK AND CONTRACTS DISCHARGE

An electronic version has now been received and new contracts will be issued as soon as possible.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

2003/368 RISK ASSESSMENTS RESUME

The Agisters will be briefed on and issued with copies of the Risk Assessment forms which require some additional completion. Risk Assessments must be completed for each and every drift, one or two days before the drift is due to take place. The Risk Assessments will be subject to review as time goes on and experience in their completion is gained.

No other health and safety issues have arisen.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2003/369 AUDITED ACCOUNTS DISCHARGE

The draft audited accounts were approved. They will now be signed off by the Official Verderer and copies provided for each member of the Court.

2003/370 STRATEGIC CYCLE ROUTE DISCHARGE

A working group consisting of the Official Verderer, Mrs Heron, Mr Frost and Mr Pasmore will meet on the 11th August in the Library at 10.00 a.m. to discuss the consultation document.

An extension to the deadline for responses has been requested and agreed.

2003/371 BROOMY PLAIN ROAD RESUME

Hampshire Highways wish to bring a scheme to the September Court for the Verderers' consideration. It was agreed the Highway's Engineer should attend directly after Open Court. Copies of the proposals will be provided in advance of the meeting.

2003/372 AGRI-ENVIRONMENT/STEWARDSHIP SCHEME RESUME

The application is progressing well and the draft contract is being examined.

2003/373 THE NEW FOREST SHOW DISCHARGE

The Clerk thanked those members of the Court who volunteered their services to help on the stand at this year's Show.

2003/374 JOHN PERRY DISCHARGE

Mr Perry received a formal vote of thanks from the other members of the Court for the 9 years service he has given, his hard work and valued contribution to the organisation.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.10 p.m.