

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 21st July 2010 at 9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall & Library, The Queen's House, Lyndhurst.

PRESENT:	Mr O Crosthwaite Eyre	Official Verderer
	Mr A Gerrelli	Elected Verderer
	Mr J F Kitcher MBE	Elected Verderer
	Miss D Macnair MBE	Elected Verderer & Chairman of the Staff Committee
	Mr C Maton	National Park Appointed Verderer
	The Hon Mr R Montagu	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Mr A H Pasmore	Elected Verderer
	Mrs P Thorne	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister
APOLOGIES:	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2010/5026 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 16th June 2010 were approved.

2010/5027 CONDITION OF STOCK RESUME

The Head Agister reported that the condition of stock is good. The ponies and cattle look well. There is more food on the Forest than in most fields.

One or two mares with foals are not looking as well as they might although most have smooth coats. The foals look well but the mares have lost condition over their backs. Any that are clearly below the standard will be removed. Those which are borderline will be left until the drifts which start in a few weeks time.

Miss Macnair commented that a study of ponies teeth is being undertaken and it has become apparent that some animals' teeth are badly chipped. This problem arose many years ago when the aerodromes were first broken up and redundant gravel pits were returned to the Open Forest and ponies were grazing amongst the stones. The re-surfacing of the roads with tar and chippings is felt to be creating a similar problem now, together with pea shingle laid across the Forest on private driveways. With regard to the tar and chippings the Clerk said she would speak with the Highway Authority to ask if the excess chippings can be removed once the new road surfaces have bedded in.

2010/5028 AGISTER TRAINING – THE HUMANE SLAUGHTER ASSOCIATION DISCHARGE

The Head Agister advised the Court that a very useful session had taken place with representatives of the HSA. This was arranged as it was felt that a refresher course on the humane destruction of stock was appropriate.

The Head Agister left the meeting.

2010/5029 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS RESUME

The announcements and decisions were approved.

2010/5030 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

The Elected Verderers, Mrs Thorne and Mr Maton all declared an interest in the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme. Mr Gerrelli declared an interest in campsites. Mr Maton declared an interest in National Park planning matters.

2010/5031 FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME

The Financial Statement for June 2010 was approved.

2010/5032 DRAFT AUDITED ACCOUNTS RESUME

A draft of the income and expenditure for the audited accounts has been received from the auditors. The final draft of the accounts will be available in good time for the September Court. The budget and five year plans are also being prepared. The Official Verderer advised the Court that the Deputy Surveyor has confirmed that the Forestry Commission's budget is likely to be cut by 30% between now and 2014/15 and this may affect the Court's administrative grant.

2010/5033 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED AS AT END OF JUNE 2010 RESUME

Ponies	4746	Pigs	14
Cattle	2184	Sheep	153
Donkeys	117		
SUB TOTAL	7047	TOTAL ALL ANIMALS	7214

2010/5034 ANIMALS REMOVED IN JUNE DUE TO POOR CONDITION RESUME

6 mares with foals

Total year to date (January to June) - 546

Total ponies removed November 2009 - May 2010 inclusive - 574.

2010/5035 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT RESUME

The commoner who said he cannot pay his marking fees has now paid for 4 of his 10 animals. A letter has been sent to him warning that if he does not pay for his remaining 6 animals, he is likely to be prosecuted for non payment of marking fees in the Magistrates' Court.

2010/5036 JACK DONKEYS RESUME

At the request of the Court, the Staff Committee considered the issue of entire Jack donkeys and whether they should be allowed to continue running out on the Forest. This followed complaints that some Jacks are serving mares resulting in mule foals.

As a result of the Staff Committee's discussions, the two options which were put forward to the Court by the Chairman of the Staff Committee.

1. Jack donkeys should only be turned out at the same time as the stallions.
2. Jack donkeys should continue to run on the Forest all year round but any which are seen to serve mares should be removed.

The Court gave careful consideration to both options. It was felt that waiting until after a Jack has served a mare is too late and so option 1 was favoured.

A request that free grazing for Jack donkeys be provided if the turn out period is restricted to that which is applied to the stallions, was rejected. The reason given that it is considered that donkeys are more economically viable than ponies and therefore do not need subsidising in the same way as the stallions.

The decision that Jack donkeys will in future only be allowed on the Forest for the same period as the stallions are turned out will be announced in September. This will allow the Chairman of the Staff Committee to communicate the decision to the Agister team.

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)

Mr Alan Lovell, High Sheriff of Hampshire
Mrs Lovell

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

The Official Verderer welcomed Mr Alan Lovell, High Sheriff of Hampshire, and his lady wife to the Court.

2010/5037 ACCOUNTS

Although we have received the audited accounts for the financial year 2009/2010, we have not been able to consider and approve them in time for this month's court because they are still only in draft form.

We therefore intend to formally approve and publish our accounts until our next Court which will be held on September 15th.

2010/5038 A31

We have been concerned for some years with the poor state of repair of many stretches of the fence line that prevent the Forest's animals from straying on to the A31, and the lay-bys in particular have desperately needed serious attention.

We are very pleased to report therefore that thanks to the efforts of Enterprise Mouchel, who are the new contractors appointed by the Highways Agency, all of the lay-by fences have now been replaced to a very high standard.

As Verderers we were invited to suggest a suitable specification to increase public safety, and our suggestions were accepted in full so that now the fences are higher and use post and rail with stiles rather than gates providing access for the public.

Taken together these modifications will much reduce litter and the risk of damage being done to the fence line by people attempting to climb over wherever they wish.

This effort bodes well for the future, and we would like to express our thanks to Enterprise Mouchel, and we hope that the same high standard continues to be adopted throughout the entire length of this essential safety fence.

2010/5039 HLS

The Scheme has now existed for over four months and much work has been done in setting up the structure and getting the inaugural projects under way, all of which is now being managed by Chris Caswell, who took up his post as the full time HLS scheme manager last month.

We ourselves, as Verderers, have been busy getting a number of projects under way within our own Verderers Grazing Scheme, which is the half of the HLS that we manage exclusively. Those projects are as follows:

1. We have purchased five new stock trailers for each of the Agisters at a total cost of £21,761. Until now each Agister has had to provide a suitable stock trailer at his own expense. This is of course very good news since it not only relieves them of a financial burden, but it also means that each have a state of the art trailer that is fit for purpose.
2. We have specially commissioned and placed an order at a cost of £11,503 for a bespoke portable pound and crush, to be used mainly at Beaulieu Road Sale Yard, which will allow microchipping to take place safely and swiftly wherever the Agisters need it.
3. We also have agreed to fund the microchipping ~~itself~~ of ponies at Beaulieu Road Sale Yard this year, and it is our intention to continue to do so if this year proves to be successful, at a cost of £2,650.per annum.
4. We have provided a grant of £10,000 towards the cost of setting up the 'Land Advisory Service team'. The team is available to provide advice on land management and access to funds from environmental schemes to tenants and Land owners in the New Forest, as well as small cash grants for improvements to individual holdings.
5. As in previous years, we are continuing to fund the provision of free reflective pony collars at a cost of just over £8,000.
6. We will be funding the installation of a mains water pipeline to run underground across the open forest to the Beaulieu Road sale yard, without which the sale yard would very soon be in breach of trading standards regulations. We will also pay for the installation of mains electricity, the building of wash-down facilities and a proper lavatory block, subject to planning permission being obtained. This long hoped for project will cost £340,000.
7. We are also investigating the purchase of 5 new Land Rovers to replace the existing fleet of Land Rovers used by the Agisters. These are now 4 years old and have given excellent service. Our intention is to replace them later this year if all goes well, and ideally to take delivery before the VAT rise in January 2011.
8. Finally, we will continue with the ongoing system of payments to all practicing commoners as existed under the previous Countryside Stewardship Scheme. Those payments will be made towards the end of the year as usual, and will total in the region of £400,000.

These eight first year projects are an ambitious and promising start to the ten year HLS programme, and as we said at the launch of the scheme our intention is not only to help conserve the landscape of the Forest through supporting grazing, but also to leave a legacy after ten years that will benefit the next generation of practicing commoners.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2010/5040 ACCIDENT REPORT FOR JUNE 2010

The Agisters attended 10 accidents compared with 18 for the same period last year.

5 ponies, 1 donkey and 1 cow were killed.

7 accidents occurred during the hours of darkness.

4 involved private cars or light commercials and 5 accidents were not reported.

3 accidents involved local motorists.

The total killed and injured for the year to date is 32 compared to 37 for the same period last year.

PRESENTMENTS BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR OF THE NEW FOREST

There were no Presentments by the Deputy Surveyor

PRESENTMENTS

2010/5041 THE COMMONERS HOUSING SCHEME

Presentment by Mr Brian Tarnoff on behalf of the New Forest Association

"The Commoners Housing Scheme has brought a number of benefits to the New Forest in the last couple of decades. The Scheme was initially conceived to help provide young commoners with affordable housing that would allow them to continue the practice of commoning. However, in the light of a recent planning application, which we believe deviated significantly from the original intent of the Scheme, the New Forest Association is aware of a loss of confidence in the Scheme as it stands. We believe that the time is right for a review to be conducted by the National Park Authority in conjunction with the Verderers and other interested parties.

The NPA took over the Scheme in July 2006 and an officer's report at that time recommended that it should be reconsidered within the then pending Commoning Review. The report of that review in 2007 mentions aspects of the Scheme which merit further research and definition. We are not aware of any progress in these respects.

NFA asks the Verderers to approach the NPA to request a review of the Scheme. Its objective would be to ensure that future commoners' housing proposals are made within a policy framework which supports the commoning tradition and ensures that it continues to contribute to the conservation and well being of the New Forest".

2010/5042 SPEEDING MOTORISTS

Presentment by Mr Derek Bennett of Sway

Mr Bennett said that a Mercedes car travelling at an excessive speed had recently overtaken him on the road between Sway and Brockenhurst. The driver turned into the Golf Club. He asked for action to be taken as he said this sort of thing happens so often.

In reply, the Official Verderer said that the Forest receives enormous support from Hampshire Police who do carry out speed enforcement operations.

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2010/5043 THE COMMONERS HOUSING SCHEME RESUME

The Court agreed that there is a loss of confidence in some quarters and that a review of the Scheme is timely and would be helpful. A formal request will therefore be made to the NPA and the Official Verderer will contact the Chief Executive.

2010/5044 SPEEDING MOTORISTS DISCHARGE

The Clerk said that if a registration number and description of the vehicle is available, plus date, time and location, the Police are often willing to pay a visit to drivers who are reported to be driving dangerously or at excessive speed. The person reporting the driver must, however, also be prepared to give their details in order to discourage malicious reports.

The Court agreed an announcement to this effect should be made at the September Court.

NEW SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2010/5045 DUCTING FOR FIBRE OPTIC CABLE IN GRIGG LANE AND WATERS GREEN, BROCKENHURST DISCHARGE

Brockenhurst College is seeking permission via Deemrose Ltd and G Farwell Ltd for a duct to be laid which will carry a multi-core fibre optic cable between the College's main campus and Brockenhurst House in Grigg Lane. The College is utilising additional space at Brockenhurst House as its proposed redevelopment of the campus at the College site has had to be postponed. The cable will enable the existing campus wide data network to include Brockenhurst House.

After careful consideration of the proposals, the Court agreed that the cable may be laid but it must follow the line of the informal footpath worn in the roadside verge on the south side of Waters Green. This is in order to avoid disturbance to Waters Green. The proposal was therefore agreed subject to the usual conditions regarding reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

The Forestry Commission is insisting that the ducting be made available for future use for cabling belonging to other companies in order to avoid any further excavations in the future and this will be a condition of its consent.

2010/5046 POWER KITING RESUME

The Forestry Commission is seeking views on its management approach to kite flying and the Court's opinion was requested, particularly on a provision for power kiting on the Forest.

Currently, no wheeled buggies are permitted on the Crown Lands and only kites up to 2m₂ may be flown.

This management approach has worked well but increasingly, requests are received for an area to be made available where larger kites or kite buggies can be used.

The Forestry Commission is consulting with various Forest management bodies to obtain their views.

The Commission will formulate a suitable written response to the correspondent and the Deputy Surveyor asked the Court to explain the reasons for its views.

The Official Verderer said this will be considered later in the meeting.

OTHER SUBMISSIONS

2010/5047 RINGWOOD ROAD, BURLEY - TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME DISCHARGE

Hampshire County Council has written to the Court seeking comments on the proposal to make permanent the present temporary pinch points in Ringwood Road Burley.

The Clerk will write back advising HCC that the Court supports the pinch points providing no additional signage is erected. It will also be pointed out that it would be nice if the scheme could be extended to Picket Post.

MATTERS ARISING OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2010/5048 THE ATLAS PROJECT RESUME

The new Atlas system is due for delivery on 4th August 2010. As soon as it is installed training will be arranged. Mr Montagu and Mr Pasmore have both expressed an interest in joining the training session.

2010/5049 CAMPSITE SURVEY RESUME

The campsite survey is written and prepared but is awaiting binding. A discussion is taking place on the best way of presenting the survey.

2010/5050 ROAD HAUNCHING RESUME

A meeting with Hampshire Highways, Mr Tim Lawton has been arranged for the 12th August.

2010/5051 A31 VERGE CLEARANCE RESUME

The meeting with Enterprise Mouchel is proving difficult to arrange because several key people have leave booked. The intention is to try to find a convenient date in September.

2010/5052 SANDHOLE POUND REPAIRS RESUME

Mrs Westerhoff and Mr Kitcher will meet on site to discuss the best way of resolving the problems at this pound. Mrs Westerhoff will be able to advise what will be acceptable to Natural England.

2010/5053 TEMPORARY SIGNS ON FENCED ROADS RESUME

The Clerk has been in touch with Hampshire Highways and has been advised that the Highway Authority has an established procedure which should secure the removal of unauthorised signs. It has been questioned whether the Waterloo Arms has a brown and white sign. If it has, the Land Rover which is parked on the verge of the A337 may contravene the conditions under which consent was granted for the sign.

2010/5054 HATCHET POND PUBLIC INFORMATION POINT DISCHARGE

The top has been cut off the post and the PIP is now in line with other similar structures on the Forest. The PIP is prominent but the Forestry Commission commented that it needs to be if it is to work.

2010/5055 LATCHMOOR BOTTOM FELLING OF PINE & HIGHWAY SAFETY FELLING RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor asked Mr Pasmore to confirm the location of the problem.

Concern was also expressed at the quantity of brash left on the roadsides throughout the Forest. The Deputy Surveyor said it will be cleared up through firewood sales. The smaller stuff will be broken down and left. The Court was not wholly happy with this response and felt too much brash is left lying around making the Forest look untidy and neglected. The Deputy Surveyor replied, saying large piles should not be left and the remnants should be distributed away from the road edge.

2010/5056 ILLEGAL PARKING STICKERS AND PARKWISE RESUME

The Clerk said the explanation of where people can park has yet to be placed on the Verderers' website. She hoped this could be done in the next few weeks. A simple form on which the Agisters can record the details of vehicles that they sticker also needs to be designed and produced. PS Louise Hubble has asked that the details be recorded so that the information can be collated along with that received from the Forest Watch Parkwise scheme. If persistent offenders are identified, the system of warnings and letters set up for Parkwise can be applied to the Verderers illegal parking scheme as well.

2010/5057 DAMAGE AT MOGSHADE CUTTING DISCHARGE

Car free ditching and dragons teeth are to be put in place in the first two weeks of August. Other places have been identified in the Forest where there is a problem with vehicles being driven onto the Open Forest and these areas will receive similar attention.

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2010/5058 WARWICKSLADE CUTTING SOUTH RESUME

Mr Pasmore produced a report following his recent visit, to which the Deputy Surveyor had annotated his comments in blue. A copy is attached to the Minutes.

However, Mr Pasmore felt serious problems still exist. There should not be areas where water is left standing for prolonged periods and there are problems with the fall on some stretches of the stream system. He felt some drains also need reconnecting and he said he will confirm which ones.

Further work is required and the Deputy Surveyor agreed the Forestry Commission wants to get it right.

Mr Pasmore was also concerned about trees which have been placed across the watercourse with the intention of creating debris dams. There is no consent for cut timber to be placed across the stream. The Deputy Surveyor said any timber which has been placed across the stream will not be removed, despite the conditions laid down by the Verderers, unless actually impeding the flow. Mr Pasmore said that this is unsatisfactory because the timber has been deliberately placed so that it will form the framework of dams as it decays.

Mrs Westerhoff said she has not been involved in this project but she understood the overall plan is to restore the stream to what it was in the past. The Verderers do not want to see grazing adversely affected and it is important to assess if any of the issues are damaging grazing. Some wet areas may provide good grazing, especially in periods of very dry weather. It is a question of seeing if what is delivered is beneficial for the animals and conservation.

The Deputy Surveyor said that this is where the Forestry Commission needs to get the scheme to. The Official Verderer commented that it would be a shame if failure to reach agreement on this scheme results in a loss of the spirit of co-operation between the two organisations.

OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2010/5059 DRIFTWAY AT LONGDOWN

DISCHARGE

Mr Maton raised the question of whether a driftway at Longdown should be opened up to allow access for commoners stock. He enquired whether the Court would take over responsibility for the gate at the Forest end of the track which has been closed for years. The land belongs to the Barker-Mills Estate. The Clerk confirmed she has recently received a letter from Hampshire County Council about re-opening this track as part of its proposals to improve access under its Lost Ways Project. The Official Verderer's response was that the Court cannot take responsibility for the gate and fencing now or in the future and that if the County wishes to open up the track it must maintain it.

2010/5060 WORKS OPPOSITE PILLEY STORES

DISCHARGE

Mr Gerrelli said he has noticed work is being undertaken opposite Pilley Stores where soil has been brought in and dragons teeth put in place. The Deputy Surveyor confirmed this is being done to protect the green from illegal parking.

2010/5061 THE MINISTER'S MANDATE DISCHARGE

The Mandate expired several years ago, however the Deputy Surveyor said it is still valid as the Minister gave authority for it to continue. The Deputy Surveyor confirmed the renewal will be considered in the future.

2010/5062 WASTE HEATHER BALES RESUME

Unused heather bales in Pitts Wood and Island Thorns have still not been removed. The Deputy Surveyor said he has given a commitment that they will be removed.

2010/5063 WOOLFIELD HILL COTTAGE RESUME

Mr Pasmore raised the issue of this extremely valuable property. He said its legal status needs to be resolved. At present it is an illegal encroachment on Common Rights and an exchange of land is required in order to rectify a mistake that was made 30 years ago. Mr Street has the file and the Official Verderer asked to read it. Mr Pasmore added that the private owner is not at fault and should not suffer any financial disadvantage as a consequence of the problem being put right.

The Deputy Surveyor and Area Land Agent left the meeting.

OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST COURT AND PREVIOUS COURTS

2010/5064 ANIMAL HEALTH BILL RESUME

January
2011

The proposals have now been dropped. The Government will investigate ways to share with livestock keepers the responsibility for preparing for and dealing with outbreaks of disease. The Advisory Group is to report by December 2010.

VERDERERS' HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME (HLS)

2010/5065 VERDERERS' GRAZING SCHEME DISCHARGE

The details of the VGS are now in the public domain. Board minutes will be circulated to the Court as will the diagram setting out the structure and the register of projects. Three themed working groups have been set up and will shortly start work.

2010/5066 FIVE YEAR BREAK CLAUSE DISCHARGE

Mrs Westerhoff reported her findings. DEFRA expects the scheme to be in place for 10 years. Current finances guarantee it up until 2013 with the next 7 year period being negotiated with the European Union now. The five year break clause will only be invoked if there is a serious dispute about something in the agreement. All participants must comply with good agricultural practice and the Verderers' agreement with commoners says members of the scheme must satisfy cross-compliance.

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

2010/5067 NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY CORE STRATEGY DISCHARGE

No further representations are required. The Strategy is with Government.

2010/5068 NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN - REPORT ON THE MEETING ON 1ST JULY RESUME

Mr Deakin produced a report for the Court which has been circulated, on the inaugural meeting of the NPA Recreation Strategy Steering Group. 20 people attended the meeting with representatives from virtually all user groups. A steering group has been set up and is clearly an attempt to minimise future conflicts between parties. The terms of reference relate to the actions listed within the Strategy document, rather than the policy itself, but that doesn't mean that policy cannot be modified. It is hoped that the output will be actions executed with accurate data, stakeholder engagement, improved input of appropriate expertise and implementation advice, and overall better communication. It is hoped it will not evolve in to a talking shop.

There should be four full meetings a year with sub groups meeting as required. The initial work in preparation for the second meeting is to go through the Strategy Document Action list and assign a priority order, choosing a few (five) for early consideration and implementation.

The group recognises and accepts that many future actions will require the agreement and permission of other parties, those parties being represented within the group.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

2010/5069 WELFARE TOUR RESUME
December

The date of the welfare tour will be 7th December 2010.

2010/5070 REPLACEMENT OF OGDEN'S No 2 FOOTBRIDGE DISCHARGE

No objections were raised to Hampshire County Council's proposals for a replacement footbridge at Ogdens.

ITEM RESUMED FROM EARLIER IN THE COURT

2010/5071 POWER KITING DISCHARGE

The Court was unanimous in its view that this activity is in material conflict with the Verderers' policy.

There are specific concerns with this activity, such as 'skidding' which could represent a hazard to other Forest users as well as commoners' stock. The Court felt the present status quo as regards kiting should be maintained. Power Kiting should be accommodated on private land. The Official Verderer will write to the Deputy Surveyor setting out in detail why the Court would not support a proposal to permit power kiting on the Open Forest.

ENCROACHMENTS

2010/5072 ENCROACHMENT AT HOME FARM BARTLEY RESUME

The cost of this case is likely to be considerable and estimates were provided for the Court.

The CDA has agreed to share the cost with the Court.

The Court agreed that Counsel be instructed to provide an Opinion and a site visit will be arranged. Members of the Court are welcome to attend.

A decision on the next stage will be dependent upon Council's Opinion.

MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2010/5073 LAG DISCHARGE

Mr Gerrelli said the LAG is keen to see applications from commoners. Several people in the Forest have benefited from a grant from the LAG.

STAFF MATTERS (including the Staff Committee)

2010/5074 DRIFTS DISCHARGE

The Court agreed the Agisters should concentrate on catching mares with foals and any animals whose condition going into the winter gives cause for concern.

It is thought that as there are so few foals, less help will be forthcoming from commoners.

2010/5075 STALLION INSPECTIONS DISCHARGE

The NFPB&CS has suggested the Verderers join with the Society in inspecting stallions to run on the Forest at a different venue – such as Ford Farm. The reasons given that it is more comfortable to inspect stallions under cover and an arena lends itself to the ponies being shown on a triangle rather than straight lines, giving the judges a greater opportunity to study the animals.

However, the Court disliked this suggestion for a number of reasons. Firstly, stallion inspections at Beaulieu Road are traditional and many members of the public like to come along and watch. They are less likely to do that on private property. Secondly, concern was expressed that in time, pressure would be applied to undertake inspections in the continental style, with loose jumping required as well.

All in all, the Court decided that it would prefer to retain its independence and tradition and remain at Beaulieu Road, with the exception of Miss Macnair who did not agree with this decision. The Clerk will advise the NFPB&CS accordingly.

TRAINING

RESUME

Earlier in the meeting the Head Agister reported on the training received from the Humane Slaughter Association.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

RESUME

There are no health and safety issues at present.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2010/5076 STREAM RESTORATION PROJECTS

DISCHARGE

Mr Pasmore said he is worried about the Forestry Commission trying to ride roughshod over the Court's decisions. He felt the projects represent a large scale threat to the commoners' grazing. Fletchers Water could be a real problem. It was suggested that the Forestry Commission's and Natural England's aim is to create wetter conditions round the streams.

In reply, Mrs Westerhoff said the ultimate aim is to achieve a benefit for nature conservation. She enquired whether grazing has been adversely affected so far and she said she would welcome the opportunity to go out on site to consider the proposals.

The Official Verderer said he is concerned that the spirit of co-operation is being eroded. He added he does not want to see disharmony between the organisations.

Mr Pasmore felt the Court must be firm on the conditions of consent that it imposes and these should be in writing.

The Official Verderer will write to the Deputy Surveyor to express concern that some conditions set by the Court appear to have been ignored.

2010/5077 REFLECTIVE COLLARS - SIGNS ON POUNDS

DISCHARGE

A suggestion has been made that notices should be displayed at the drifts, encouraging commoners to fit reflective collars to their ponies. This is considered to be a good idea and the Clerk will arrange for some suitable notices to be made up.

2010/5078 HIT & RUN REWARD SCHEME

DISCHARGE

The Clerk enquired whether the Court wishes the hit and run reward scheme to be actively promoted. The Court agreed it would be useful.

2010/5079 REMOVAL OF CATTLE GRID AT SUTTON PLACE, BROCKENHURST

DISCHARGE

The Clerk reported that the Highway Authority proposes to remove the redundant cattle grid at the entrance to Sutton Place. As this grid serves no useful purpose, no objections were raised.

To end the meeting, the High Sheriff said he had very much enjoyed his visit. He said he will leave with a very favourable impression of the Verderers' Court. He added that he would be interested to

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hear the Verderers' views on sustainable energy and what impact it would be likely to have on the Forest. The Official Verderer replied that the Verderers would consider any proposals that are brought forward. He went onto thank the High Sheriff and his wife for attending and sitting through the whole of the Committee.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 12.33 p.m.