

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 17th May 2006 at 9.30 a.m. in the Library, The Queen's House, Lyndhurst.

PRESENT:	Mr O Crosthwaite Eyre	Official Verderer
	Mr A Gerrelli	Elected Verderer
	Cllr Mrs K Heron	Hampshire County Council Appointed Verderer
	Mr J F Kitcher	Elected Verderer
	Miss D Macnair	Elected Verderer
	Mr A H Pasmore	Elected Verderer
	Mrs P Thorne	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister (first four items only)
APOLOGIES:	Mr J Adams	Elected Verderer & Chairman of the Staff Committee
	Mr P Frost	Countryside Agency Appointed Verderer
	The Hon R Montagu	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer

IN COMMITTEE

The Head Agister was present for the first four items.

2006/2276 RE-APPOINTMENT OF NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY VERDERER DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer was pleased to announce that Cllr Mrs Kathy Heron agreed to accept the National Park Authority's invitation to continue to represent the Authority on the Verderers' Court. Cllr Heron will remain until a proper appointments criteria has been agreed. Cllr Heron thanked the Official Verderer and said she is delighted to remain a member of the Court.

2006/2277 LOCAL ACCESS FORUM DISCHARGE

Mrs Thorne suggested that Cllr Mrs Heron should represent the Verderers on this Forum. No objections were raised and Cllr Heron agreed to do so.

2006/2278 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING DISCHARGE

The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 18th April 2006 were approved (and signed after the meeting).

2006/2279 CONDITION OF STOCK & WELFARE TOUR RESUME

Report by Head Agister

The Head Agister said that a lot of stock has been removed this spring. The Agisters and Commoners have been very busy. Their efforts were born out by the comments made on the recent Welfare Tour which was well attended by representatives of the various welfare societies. Mr Adams gave a brief talk prior to the commencement of the tour during which he explained that conditions on the Forest were not as good as in recent years. This was most useful and laid the ground before everyone went out. In fact those present on the Tour were of the view that the picture Mr Adams had painted was blacker than what was actually found. Positive comments were received from the welfare representatives who

appreciated the difficulties the Forest sometimes faces and felt that generally the condition of stock was acceptable in view of this year's dry, cold spring. The Verderers were congratulated on the very good management system which exists in the Forest and which deals with any problems which may arise.

Miss Macnair congratulated the Agisters on being on top of any problems.

The Official Verderer said the welfare organisation representatives, many of whom have been attending for the past 10 years, now totally understand how the system works when problems arise. This generally means serious complaints are avoided which was not always the case 5 or more years ago. Representatives came this year knowing that spring was late and they were therefore not surprised to find things are not perfect.

Approximately 400 animals have been removed this winter. This is a higher number than in the past few years but considerably less than 4 or 5 years ago when the number would have been nearer 600.

In response to a comment which was made privately by the DEFRA vet that the worst ponies had been removed, the Head Agister agreed with her and added that that is what is meant to be done and how it should work. It was felt a shame that the DEFRA Vet did not voice her concerns to everyone present during the discussion following the tour but the Official Verderer remarked that perhaps she did not feel strongly enough to do so.

Mr Kitcher commented that the attitude amongst the welfare organisations has changed now they understand how the system works. They know that ponies will not always be fat and if a poor pony is found it will be dealt with. The RSPCA ring the Agisters if a problem is reported to them.

2006/2280

WELFARE OF STOCK – STRANGLES OUTBREAK

RESUME

The strangles outbreak in the Woodgreen area seems to have died down. Some ponies which have recovered from strangles but whose condition gave cause for concern have now been removed. There now seem to be a few ponies on Hale Purlieu with strangles and it is hoped that if the weather improves it will not spread further.

The Head Agister left the meeting.

Miss Macnair commented that the Court is very fortunate to have Jonathan Gerrelli as Head Agister as he is particularly good at dealing with the public.

2006/2281

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS

RESUME

The Court agreed to formally accept the adoption of the scale of fees for brands.

Mr Pasmore suggested some minor amendments to the Announcement about the Welfare Tour and the Announcements and Decisions were then approved.

2006/2282 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

The Elected Verderers and Mrs Thorne declared an interest in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

Mr Gerrelli declared an interest in any items concerning Campsites and in the request for a water supply to fields at Bull Hill, Pilley.

Cllr Mrs Heron did not participate in the discussions concerning the Hollands Wood and Roundhill Campsite Proposals, in case doing so jeopardises her right to debate and vote at National Park Authority meetings. Cllr Mrs Heron said she would be taking further advice about her position in this respect.

The Official Verderer declared an interest in matters concerning Forest golf courses.

2006/2283 FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME

The Financial Statement for April was approved.

2006/2284 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED RESUME

The following Marking Fees have been received:

Ponies	3935
Cattle	1092
Donkeys	78
Pigs	6
Total	5111

2006/2285 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT RESUME

Letters are being written to six commoners who have not yet paid their marking fees. The Official Verderer asked the Court to formally consider whether to continue with the policy of pursuing such commoners, if necessary to the Magistrates' Court. The Court unanimously agreed to do so.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

The Official Verderer reminded everyone present that the Verderers' Court has the same status as a Magistrates' Court and as such photography is not allowed.

2006/2286 BRANDS

As part of the ongoing re-organisation of the list of registered brands, we feel it would be helpful to clarify a few key points.

Firstly, I can confirm that the old system whereby the cost of registering a brand was refunded in some circumstances ceased to operate in 2002, and was replaced by a

flat fee of £50. In 2005 the standard registration fee was increased from £50 to £85.

So that there can be no doubt, the present scale of fees is as follows:-

1. New brand application by a new commoner including a check on Forest Rights; **£85.**
2. Transfers of brands within a practising commoners' immediate family: **Free.**
3. Transfers of brands between practising commoners: **£20.**
4. New brand applications for members of practising commoners' immediate family: **£20.**

An "immediate family" member is defined as a spouse, child, grandchild, and so on. A "practising commoner" is defined as someone who is currently paying marking fees.

This scale of charges has been formally re-endorsed for the benefit of the minutes of today's Court.

In addition there seems to be some uncertainty as to what we mean by a "business partnership" when applying for a brand. Our intention is to create a simple system whereby the ownership of an animal can be easily ascertained by referring to the reorganised list of registered brands.

This system will therefore commit either individuals or partnerships to sign a legally binding declaration which we will draft, for the purposes of the list of brands, stating that all the signatories accept joint ownership and responsibility for any animal that bears their brand.

Therefore any one brand can be registered either by a single individual for use on the Forest, or a group of individuals who have all signed the declaration that they are partners and as such are the joint owners of any animal that bears their brand.

Thus if a husband and wife wish to use one brand they must both sign the declaration in respect of that one brand. By signing a declaration as a partnership in respect of a brand, each signatory is declaring ownership of any animal that bears that brand and accordingly they are accepting joint and several responsibility and liability in law for that animal.

2006/2287 NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

We have conducted two training events in order to give the Members and Officers of the National Park Authority an understanding of the commoning system here in the Forest, and the problems that we face both now and in the future. Both events have been very well received by those who attended them, to the extent that the Authority have asked us to organise regular training events for their Members and Officers in the future so that this vital process can continue.

I am also very pleased to announce that, as a most welcome signal of the Authority's growing appreciation of the great importance of commoning, they have offered us a grant that will represent one third of the cost of running a fleet of five Land Rovers for our team of Agisters. This £12,500 per annum grant will run for five years, and will allow us to provide each Agister with a robust and suitable vehicle for conducting their many duties on the Forest.

I would like to publicly thank the Members of the Authority for their decision, which

was taken at their very first meeting as a fully fledged Authority with spending powers. This type of funding goes directly towards enhancing our day to day provision of support for the commoners and their animals, and it bodes well for the future in these early days of the National Park's existence.

2006/2288 NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY APPOINTED VERDERER

I am very pleased to announce that Mrs Kathy Heron has agreed to continue to serve as the Authority's appointed Verderer. Mrs Heron's appointment is on an interim basis until such time as the Authority has formulated a long-term formal appointment procedure, which will be some time this autumn.

2006/2289 FOALS

This is the time of year that many foals are being born on the open Forest, and filled with the joys of new life though they are, they have absolutely no road sense whatsoever. I would like to remind all motorists of the dangers that foals present, and urge them to take extra care whenever they see foals near the road and drive with caution when they approach them. In making this announcement I am hoping that this appeal will be well publicised in the local newspapers so that unnecessary accidents can be avoided.

2006/2290 WELFARE TOUR

The usual spring Welfare Tour took place on Monday, and was attended by representatives from the RSPCA, the ILPH, the Donkey Sanctuary, the BHS, The Blue Cross the CDA, the NFPB&CS, and the DEFRA Veterinary Service. A large area of the Forest was covered and four hundred or so ponies, cattle and donkeys were seen on the tour.

It has undeniably been a very difficult period for the ponies this year and the late spring and prolonged cold winter has meant that over 400 animals have been removed from the Forest and the agisters have been working extremely hard.

All those present agreed that despite the delayed emergence of spring, the condition of the majority of the animals on the Forest is acceptable, and there are no causes for concern in terms of their welfare in the long term.

The Chief Executive of the ILPH noted that, in the ten years that his organisation has been attending the tours, the standard of the animals generally has continued to improve, and that standard has been maintained through the work of the Agisters. He added that he wished that other parts of the country could follow our example here in the Forest. This commendation was endorsed by the RSPCA, and by the representatives of the other welfare organisations present.

On behalf of the Verderers, I also made the point to those present that the Agisters would not be able to do their work so successfully without the continuing co-operation and assistance that is given to them by the owners of the animals, which in itself is of great credit to the Forest.

2006/2291 VERDERERS ELECTION

At the February Court I drew attention to the election of 2 Verderers, which is due to take place on 24 November this year, and stressed how important it is that those who are eligible register to vote. I am pleased to note that a number of registration forms have already been received in the office.

I would like to remind commoners that to be eligible to vote, you must be over 21; 'occupy' one acre of land, or more, to which common rights are attached; and you must be included on the electoral register. To assist commoners who may be uncertain whether or not their land benefits from common rights, the usual fees for conducting a search will be waived and you are welcome to make an appointment to visit the Verderers' Office for this purpose.

If you have not yet submitted a form, the deadline is 1st September, but please don't wait until the last minute and risk losing your vote. Registration forms are available by the door – please help yourself. Additional forms will continue to be available from the Verderers' Office, and anyone whose name was included in the Register for the last election in 2003, will automatically be sent a form to complete and return for this year's election.

You are reminded that nominations for the 2 posts which are due to be contested, must be submitted to the returning officer by 6th November. Anyone wanting further information or advice on this, should contact the Verderers' Office.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2006/2292 ACCIDENT REPORTS FOR APRIL 2006

The Agisters attended 6 accidents in April which compares with 10 for the same period last year.

2 ponies, 1 cow and 1 pig were killed and 1 pony was injured.

4 accidents occurred during the hours of darkness and 4 involved private cars or light commercials.

2 accidents were not reported and 4 involved local motorists.

The total killed and injured for the year to date is 31 - the same for this period last year.

PRESENTMENTS BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR OF THE NEW FOREST

None

PRESENTMENTS

2006/2293 LYNDHURST GOLF COURSE

Presentment by Mr Michael Cooper on behalf of the New Forest Commoners' Defence Association Committee

"Our Association has recently been made aware of a programme of works to be carried out by New Forest Golf Club Ltd at Lyndhurst Golf Course. We have visited the site and reviewed this quite comprehensive programme, which we understand is to take place over a five-year period. A number of issues concerning these proposals will have to be discussed at our next committee meeting in early June, and our association would be most grateful if it was the intention of the Court to make any decisions concerning this project today, that it be deferred to allow time for us to prepare a suitable response for the June Court".

The Official Verderer replied that the matter is on the Agenda for further discussion later today and the CDA's comments will be taken into account.

2006/2294 DAMAGED NEW FOREST SSSI
Presentment by Mrs Olive Collins

"Following my presentment to the Court last month regarding the damage to the New Forest SSSI you wrote requesting more information. I would not like you to think that the small number of examples highlighted in my reply represent all of my concerns, in fact they are just the tip of the iceberg. I have hundreds of photographs taken at locations throughout the Forest over the last couple of years showing varying degrees of damage but unfortunately what I don't have at the moment is the time to compile these into a comprehensive report.

For that reason I would like to make an appeal to the many other Forest people who share my concerns and ask them to write to you or to me with details and locations of areas that have been altered and therefore damaged since designation as an SSSI by any of the following:-

Damage caused by scrub encroachment such as bracken, gorse, seedling pine, bramble, birch etc.

Damage caused by blocked rivers, streams and ditches particularly those that overflow onto the Open Forest.

Damage caused by modern management practices such as flailing.

Damage caused by a lack of maintenance such as inadequate amount of burning, failure to clear excessive amounts of fallen timber and failure to keep the Forest drainage ditches clear of obstructions.

Or anything else that could be considered as alteration and therefore damage to the New Forest SSSI.

I will, as time permits, continue to provide you with as much information as I can".

2006/2295 DAMAGED NEW FOREST SSSI
Presentment by Mr Bob Cooper, Minstead Manor Commoner

Mr Cooper supported Mrs Collins' presentment, citing other areas where blocked drains and highway ditches have resulted in flooding.

He went on to say that the Collins' have a volume of instances of mismanagement and/or neglect by English Nature and the Environment Agency and even Hampshire County Council and the Forestry Commission.

Mr Cooper spoke of a conversation he had with "probably the wisest commoner of the Forest both by age and experience and was told in no uncertain terms that he had never seen the Forest in such a poor state in all his 80 years". This opinion is seemingly supported by correspondents to local newspapers and certainly Mr Cooper's own conversations with visitors, rambles, customers and even cyclists and local residents whose opinion is that English Nature and the Environment Agency must be brought to heel immediately.

Mr Cooper said that "however distasteful the sanction of non co-operation with future plans may sound I ask the Court to re-emphasise this to the miscreants.

Mr Cooper then asked the Court to require the removal of debris dams fixed by stakes which he said are illegal obstructions to the watercourses. He added it is absurd to even suggest that they are an integral part of the "restoration" of any of the New Forest's phenomena.

2006/2296 ENCROACHMENT – MINSTEAD STUDY CENTRE CAR PARK
Presentment by Mr Bob Cooper

Mr Cooper referred to an illegal encroachment at Minstead where permission appears to have been granted for extension to the Study Centre car park. He sought the Court's support in dealing with the matter.

2006/2297 BRIAN BLESSED – PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL PARKS

Mr Blessed was visiting the Court and made the following Presentment:-

"My name is Brian Blessed, I am President of the Council for National Parks. I am delighted to be here today, a guest of the New Forest Association, to see this Court working as part of the vital administrative system within the National Park. Not only does it play an invaluable role in the management of the Crown Lands, along with the Forestry Commission, it also allows anyone to have their say on matters of importance to the Forest – a truly democratic system – long may it continue.

The Park is of course much more than the Crown Lands and provides an opportunity for the greater protection of this essential national lung. It is a breathing space for the nation as well as a living, being entity. As one of the National Parks of England it offers opportunity for people to enjoy the countryside in a unique setting – the last Royal Forest of England".

Mr Blessed then went on to extol the virtues of National Parks elsewhere and expressed thanks to Chris Bonnington who had encouraged him to become President of the CNP. He stressed the importance of protecting the countryside and said that there is a need to be flexible but don't change things for the sake of change. He said it is important to understand the sole of the people and the countryside and if something works – leave it alone!

Finally, Mr Blessed thanked the Verderers for listening to him today.

The Official Verderer responded by thanking Mr Blessed for coming to the Court. He added the Court has not had a Presentment like Mr Blessed's for many years and thanked him for taking the time to visit the New Forest.

IN COMMITTEE in The Library

The Official Verderer welcomed Cllr Jonathan Glenn, Executive Member for the Environment, Hampshire County Council. He thanked him for taking the time to come along to see how the Verderers' Court works.

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2006/2298 LYNDHURST GOLF CLUB DISCHARGE

This matter is on the Agenda for discussion later.

2006/2299 DAMAGED NEW FOREST SSSI RESUME

The Official Verderer reported that following Mrs Collins' Presentment at the last Court, he wrote to her asking for details of the damage. Mrs Collins' reply was circulated.

Mr Pasmore suggested that someone needs to explain to Mrs Collins that the Verderers have difficulty stopping the work because it is supposed to be desirable for conservation and the Court has been told that the EU legislation takes precedence over the New Forest Acts. The Court may, however, be able to influence decisions which are taken.

The legal position has not yet been tested and academic lawyers argue continually about whether EU legislation can over-ride National legislation.

Markway Lawn was cited as a typical example where the conservationists say no draining. The New Forest Acts, however, specifically require drainage to be maintained.

Mr Pasmore then referred to a recent letter from Simon Weymouth (Forestry Commission), who has arranged a number of site meetings in various areas of the Forest where more mire restoration is proposed. He added that Mrs Collins' list is just the tip of the iceberg.

2006/2300 DAMAGED NEW FOREST SSSI DISCHARGE
Presentment by Mr Bob Cooper

Mr Cooper was supporting Mrs Collins and was generally making the same points.

The Deputy Surveyor remarked that there should be a distinction between debris dams which occur naturally and those which are deliberately created by staking.

2006/2301 ENCROACHMENT – MINSTEAD STUDY CENTRE CAR PARK DISCHARGE
Presentment by Mr Bob Cooper

Whilst disapproving of any encroachment on Forest grazing, it was agreed that the area is outside the Court's jurisdiction and therefore no action can be taken.

SUBMISSIONS BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2006/2302 EAST BOLDRE & SWAY ALLOTMENTS – LEASES RESUME

The drafting of new agreements for the four Parish Councils is proceeding and East Boldre and Sway are now ready for signature.

The Official Verderer and Mr Pasmore will consider the leases prior to signature.

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

2006/2303 AVON WATER BLOCKAGE RESUME

The job is not yet completed. The Deputy Surveyor confirmed that work will continue.

The Clerk reported a large debris dam that has accumulated in the past couple of weeks just upstream of Wootton Bridge which may result in flooding of the adjacent small lawn and car park. The Deputy Surveyor said it will be looked at.

2006/2304 WETLAND RESTORATION/WATER BEING CHANNELLED ONTO FOREST GRAZING RESUME

Mr Simon Weymouth, Forestry Commission, has a programme of proposed works for which he had arranged site meetings which will be held over the next couple of weeks.

Mr Pasmore will prepare reports of the meetings he attends. Mr Weymouth will provide the office with copies of plans and proposals once the works have been agreed.

The Official Verderer thanked Mr Pasmore for his work in preparing reports of site meetings which are much appreciated.

2006/2305 PASSAGEWAY BETWEEN CLUMBER & FERNY KNAF DISCHARGE

The passageway improvement can clearly be seen and is excellent. It is difficult to see why Capt. Moore is concerned. The bridge which has been in place for a number of years is narrower than the standard bridges that would be put in today. It is not due for replacement for a number of years and there are others that it is more important to replace. The Deputy Surveyor will write to Capt Moore and let the Clerk have a copy of the letter.

2006/2306 SOUTHERN ELECTRIC 11KV OVERHEAD LINE – PICKET POST TO CROW DISCHARGE

A much greater distance of cable will now be placed underground thanks to funding obtained by the National Park Authority from South East England Development Agency. The Court welcomed this decision and approved the proposals subject to the usual three conditions regarding reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

2006/2307 NEW FOREST GOLF CLUB RESUME
July

Mr Will Parke reported that following the site meeting the proposed scheme is to be revised and simplified. Some items of work were considered neither necessary or desirable and a revised programme of works will be provided to the Court and CDA for their consideration. The Clerk will advise the CDA.

A number of unsatisfactory matters were noted during the site visit

including a pile of rubbish containing rusty nails, a widening of the tarmac and a dumped golf trolley. Mr Parke said however that the attitude of the management is much improved; it is now a proper members club and a lot of the proposals are welcome.

2006/2308 HOLLANDS WOOD AND ROUNDHILL CAMPSITE PROPOSALS DISCHARGE

Consultees met and argued out some very different views about how to carry out the Appropriate Assessment. A final draft of the Assessment will now be considered by the competent authorities. The Court will discuss the Assessment later but the Official Verderer invited any further comments from the applicants (FC).

The Deputy Surveyor said three points had come out of the meeting where clarity is sought. He has written to the Official Verderer and copies have been circulated to all members of the Court (copies will be sent to the three Verderers absent today).

Mr Pasmore expressed concern that dog pressure may just be moved from one part of the Forest to another. Mitigation for the area around Roundhill has been displaced to other campsites around the Forest.

It was agreed to discuss the issues later in the meeting.

2006/2309 A337 BALMER LAWN ROAD JUNCTION – NEW FOOTPATH RESUME

The County Council confirms it has no objection to a hedge but further consultation is required.

2006/2310 GATE AT MILKHAM DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor said the padlock on the gate has been checked and it is a standard issue lock. The gate has been locked because of incursion by ponies into the inclosure. It was remarked that not all keys fit all locks and it is sometimes necessary to carry both old and new keys. Unfortunately the locks are not precision made!

2006/2311 FORESTRY WORK AT TURF HILL DISCHARGE

Considerable damage followed the sale and extraction of standing timber which was dragged round the outside of the inclosure rather than through it. The Forestry Commission agreed that better planning and management is required in future.

2006/2312 CYCLE CROSSING AT HOLMSLEY RESUME

It was necessary to resume this item for June in the absence of Mr Frost.

2006/2313 REQUEST FROM THE HIGHWAYS AGENCY FOR ACCESS TO HIGHLAND WATER AND BLACKENSFORD BOTTOM RESUME

This item had to be resumed because the relevant Forestry Commission personnel have not been made aware of the proposals.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2006/2314 ASHURST CHRISTMAS TREE SALES DISCHARGE

A request by the Forestry Commission for agreement to sell Christmas Trees from Ashurst campsite as per last year was agreed.

2006/2315 11KV REFURBISHMENT – BUTTS ASH CIRCUIT (SOUTHERN ELECTRIC) DISCHARGE

The request for a short length of cable to be put underground across an area south of the A326 at Fawley which was historically part of a Verderers' inclosure and is now a grazing strip, was approved subject to anything untoward being uncovered at the site meeting which will be held on 22nd June at 10.00 a.m.

2006/2316 SPEED INDICATOR DEVICES (SID's) DISCHARGE

Three further SID sites on the B3056 Lyndhurst to Beaulieu Road, the Brockenhurst to Hatchet Pond Road and the B3055 A35 to Rising Sun road were approved. It was agreed Mr Harry Oram (FC) should liaise with the Head Agister as to the precise locations.

2006/2317 SALE OF FORESTRY COMMISSION PROPERTIES RESUME

Mr Parke reported that the Forestry Commission wishes to sell Holmsley Lodge and Shrike Cottage. It is intended that a new commoners dwelling will be constructed using a portion of the proceeds of the sale.

The Verderers' views were sought on the proposals and first thoughts included a suggestion that both properties should be subject to restrictive covenants allowing for private residential use only.

The Forestry Commission is considering drawing up criteria to use when selecting tenants for commoning properties.

2006/2318 HORSE DRAWN WAGON RIDES DISCHARGE

An approach has been made to the Forestry Commission from a gentleman wishing to operate a horse drawn wagon from Mill Lane Farm Minstead. The route follows public roads and FC gravel tracks and crosses some land in the ownership of Minstead Manor.

Concern was expressed by Mr Pasmore that such activities are intensifying recreational pressure, establishing a precedence and may lead to an increase in traffic pressure. However, the remaining members of the Court were in favour of a six month permission being issued as there is currently only one wagon ride operator in the Forest, two others having given up in the past few years. Consent was therefore finally given for a 6 month permission for the operation of the horse drawn wagon rides.

2006/2319 FALLEN DEADWOOD RESUME

A site meeting has taken place and a draft paper is being prepared for agreement between the Forestry Commission and English Nature. The paper should be available for consideration by the Court in June.

2006/2320 COUNCILLOR JONATHAN GLENN DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer raised the issue of a possible Lyndhurst Bypass. Cllr Glenn said that when some potential answers to the Forest's traffic problems have been identified together with a possible way forward he will share the information with the Court. He felt it is important to keep the dialogue open.

Councillor Jonathan Glenn, the Deputy Surveyor and Mr Parke left the meeting.

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

2006/2321 TUBERCULOSIS RESUME
July

The Clerk reported she has been in touch with Linda Smith of DEFRA who has promised to respond to the request for information concerning TB.

2006/2322 HALF MOON COMMON RESUME

DEFRA has asked for the details of all commoners who graze animals on Half Moon Common and adjacent commons. As the Court does not normally disclose such information except for a very good reason, the Official Verderer felt the Court should formally agree whether such information should be provided. The Clerk has asked DEFRA for a written explanation of why the information is required and what the likely implications will be. As yet nothing further has been heard.

Mr Pasmore said that he thought there may possibly be some incentive offered to commoners to depasture less animals. This may take the form of payments to keep animals off the Common such as happens on Dartmoor. In the meantime DEFRA is trying to work out acceptable stocking densities.

2006/2323 BRANDS RESUME
July

Progress is being made on the brand review and the item will be resumed in July.

COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

2006/2324 REFLECTIVE COLLARS DISCHARGE

It has been agreed that the Stewardship Scheme will help to purchase reflective collars up to a maximum expenditure of £7,000. The general view of the Stewardship Committee is that collars should be distributed free to the owners of animals which run in the worst areas for road accidents. It was agreed the Agisters should be consulted to agree where and who this should apply to.

Cllr Mrs Heron said that at the risk of being out of step with other members of the Court, she wished to express her dislike of fitting collars to ponies. Cllr Heron took the view that motorists should take more care.

Remaining members of the Court were in general agreement that purchasing collars is a sound use of Stewardship Scheme funds.

NATIONAL PARK

2006/2325 IN DEPTH DAY

DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer reported on the recent In Depth Day which was attended by the Chief Executive of the National Park, Mrs Lindsay Cornish and two National Park Directors, Mr Steven Trotter and Mr Jeff Haynes. The Head Agister, Jonathan Gerrelli was also present.

A very good morning included a tour round the Forest.

The fencing at Kingston Great Common was inspected and all present agreed it should not be there and that it should be on the NPA's agenda.

A new "commoners' dwelling" was visited. This is occupied by young commoner Mr Andrew Stride.

Part of the proposed new bypass route round Lyndhurst was also walked and visits were made to various well managed areas of the Forest, followed by a visit to Half Moon Common. Markway Lawn was also inspected.

The issue of signage in the Forest was also discussed.

It was agreed that such an event is most helpful and should be repeated at least once a year.

2006/2326 STATUTORY BODIES LIAISON GROUP

RESUME

It seems that at the first meeting of this group few representatives attended. The next meeting will take place on the 25th May where the National Park's new Corporate Plan will be presented and considered. The meeting will take place at Efford House, and will be attended by the Official Verderer.

Mr Pasmore asked to see a copy of the plan.

2006/2327 MINERALS AND WASTE – NPA REPRESENTATION AT WILTSHIRE CC TROWBRIDGE MEETING

RESUME

Cllr Mrs Heron reported that together with Mrs Thorne a reply has been drafted on the consultation in respect of the sites relevant to the Forest. 8 sites may impact on the Forest. Mrs Thorne congratulated Cllr Heron on all her hard work and the Official Verderer thanked them both.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

2006/2328 OFFER OF DONATION TOWARDS REFLECTIVE COLLARS FROM DISCHARGE
THE RED SHOOT AT LINWOOD

The offer of a donation for collars was gratefully accepted.

MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2006/2329 NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL DISCHARGE

Mr Kitcher apologised that he had been unable to attend the last meeting because of ill health. In Mr Frost's absence no report was therefore available. Minutes are usually circulated and the office will have a copy if anyone wishes to read them.

STAFF MATTERS (including the Staff Committee)

2006/2330 LAND ROVERS DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer explained how the acquisition of Land Rovers for the Agisters would be financed.

2006/2331 AGISTERS SALARIES DISCHARGE

Following the Remuneration Committee's review of the Agisters' Salary an increase of just under 6% was approved and will be implemented with effect from the 1st May 2006. A revised pay grade has also been selected following changes to the Agricultural Wages Board grading system.

TRAINING

2006/2332 TRAINING FOR THE AGISTERS ON WORKING ON OR NEAR THE RESUME
HIGHWAY July

Training will take place on 29th June 2006.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

There were no health and safety matters to discuss.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2006/2333 LYNDHURST BYPASS DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer wrote to the two New Forest Members of Parliament regarding the bypass and replies have been received from both.

2006/2334 REVISION OF THE HIGHWAY CODE RESUME

Miss Macnair reported that the Highway Code is currently being revised. She suggested a requirement to halve speed when dipping headlights on country roads would help reduce animal accidents. It was agreed a copy of the Code should be obtained and information on the consultation process.

2006/2335 HONEYSUCKLE COTTAGE, HYDE RESUME

Cllr Mrs Heron reported that the gates that have been erected on the track adjacent to Honeysuckle Cottage are illegal and must come down. Further details, papers and a plan will be provided to the office in order that any necessary representations can be made.

2006/2336 STALLIONS RESUME

A stallion on Ipley Green is reportedly causing some problems for local riders. After careful consideration it was decided that the Agister for the area should be asked his view on the stallion's temperament and depending on his report the horse may or may not be removed.

The Clerk will seek further information from the Agister.

2006/2337 MICROCHIPPING OF HORSES RESUME

The EU proposals have now been received via DEFRA and a paper was circulated to all members of the Court with a request from the Clerk that comments be sent to the office as a matter of urgency.

2006/2338 POUNDS RESUME

Mr Adams has prepared a paper on the cost of maintaining the stock pounds. It was agreed to discuss the matter at the next Court when Mr Adams will hopefully be present.

2006/2339 HOLLANDS WOOD AND ROUNDHILL CAMPSITES RESUME

In view of the number of Verderers who were unable to attend the meeting, it was agreed a decision should be deferred. Further discussion took place during which the Official Verderer explained the position as regards the Appropriate Assessment and the role of the competent authorities. It was, however, decided that because of the complexity and importance of the issue, a special meeting would be convened on Monday, 5th June at 2.00 p.m. in order that the matter can be given careful consideration.

It was queried whether the Court's original decision to refuse consent to the proposals is on the Verderers' Website and the Clerk was asked to check.

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