

Presentment

Court of Verderers December 2020



By Email: enquiries@verderers.org.uk

Mrs Charlotte Lines
Chairman, New Forest Commoners Defence Association & practising commoner

Re: Closed Car Parks' & Verge parking

The New Forest Commoners' Defence Association asks that the Court reaffirms the importance it attaches to the [Ministers Mandate](#)¹. The mandate has been described by ministers as the Forestry Commission's "*licence to operate*"² on the Crown Lands with the New Forest.

The Mandate states that the principal management objective in the New Forest should be the conservation of the natural & cultural heritage of the Crown lands.

We are deeply concerned that Forestry England is failing to meet its conservation objectives specially regarding verges which are designated habitats.

1. Closed Car Parks - we are perplexed as to why when FE have spent thousands of pounds of HLS funding on delivering a verge restoration project only to close car parks (9 according to their website) which only serves to displace visitors to park cars on our highly designated & vulnerable verges. Therefore, completely at odds with the verge restoration project.
2. Destroying grazing - The NFCDA is concerned at the ongoing damage to verges as regards grazing for our stock, increased blocking of access to barriers for stock management.
3. Damage to designated habitats - Given the severity of verge parks we now see across the forest on a regular basis we would like to understand if FE have any intention to undertake an Assessment to identify & examine the implications of verge parking for the designated habitats as well as the implications for habitat types & species present outside the boundaries of that site & functionally linked; insofar as those implications are liable to affect the conservation objectives of the site.

It appears that the same level of scrutiny which FE apply when considering & issuing permits, is not something they themselves are adhering to with regards to verge parking.

We ask that FE consider their approach to a car park closures & look at phasing closures rather than closing 9 car parks all at the same time. We ask for clarification as to why car parks remain close, what is being done to manage verge parking, including an update on the long-term strategy for managing parking across the forest more effectively.

Contact: Charlotte@realnewforest.org

¹ Minister's Mandate to the Forestry Commission: <https://www.realnewforest.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Ministers-Mandate-1999.pdf>

² House of Commons, Hansard, 24th July 2006, Vol 449, Col 714