



Presentment to the New Forest Court of Verderers, March 2021

The Friends of the New Forest wholeheartedly agree with the comments of the Official Verderer, as reported in this week's Lymington Times (Friday 12th March). We agree with the premise that the uncontrolled, unmitigated growth of informal recreation is imperilling the working of the rural economy upon which the character of the Forest depends.

We have provided your clerk with addresses on social media where the abuse of the Forest is celebrated through the flagrant flouting of standards of reasonable behaviour. We ask the Court to review these examples of abuse of the Forest, and if members of the Court share our sense of outrage, to press Forestry England to challenge this unacceptable behaviour. If such behaviour does not result in Forestry England enforcing its bylaws, then what will?

Members of the Court, we don't intend to name these addresses in open Court as we don't want to offer these abusers the oxygen of publicity.

Members of the Court will be aware of growing concerns in the Forest that the re-branded Forestry England are undergoing a fundamental cultural shift in which the sound management of the special qualities of the Forest are of secondary interest to reducing costs and increasing revenues. We are concerned that the unwillingness of Forestry England to invest in the effective management of recreation is symptomatic of this change. We offer Forestry England this opportunity to prove us wrong.

The Friends of the New Forest thank the Official Verderer for showing leadership in this matter. Sir, through this presentment we urge you to follow this matter through and to press for a step change in the management of informal recreation on the Forest. We believe that such a step change is needed -now- not only to curtail abuse but to manage increasing pressure and ensure that everyone can continue to respectfully enjoy this exceptional place.

John Ward
Chair Friends of the New Forest