

VERDERERS COURT
16th June 2021

ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS

EDWARD HERON

Today is the last Court at which Edward Heron will be present as the Verderer appointed by the National Park Authority.

Edward joined the court in September 2015. Notwithstanding his busy career as a County and District Councillor, as well as his membership of the National Park Authority, we have been fortunate to have had the benefit of his wisdom in our discussions.

He has contributed to the workings of the Court in many ways. A particular contribution was his role on the Housing Review of Forestry England's properties in the New Forest. In addition to his political experience and contacts, Edward brought to the Court a deep love and knowledge of the Forest. We wish him well in the future.

I understand that the NFNPA will appoint a Verderer to replace Edward Heron at its meeting on 1st July.

FOREST CAMPSITES

The Court supports the notion of relocating the Forest campsites off the Open Forest. It is, however, felt that unless this is done in conjunction with providing some alternative camping opportunities in the Forest, the instances of wild camping will increase.

The Court's view is in line with its longstanding policy, as shown in the Verderers' leaflet 'The New Forest – Precious Wilderness or Suburban Park.'

Policy No. 4. CAMPING

4.1 In deciding on proposals for new or altered camping facilities, the Verderers will give favourable consideration to any application they receive where;

4.1.1 they are advised by English Nature and/or any other relevant authority, that the proposed development and its subsequent use will cause no material conflict with the ecological or other scientific qualities of the Forest which the Court has a statutory duty to protect, and,

4.1.2 they are satisfied that the proposed development and its subsequent use will otherwise cause no material conflict with the special qualities of the Forest.

4.2 In relation to existing camping facilities, the Verderers will, where these facilities or their use is in conflict with the special qualities of the Forest, seek to secure either their relocation to such more suitable sites less damaging to the Forest and beyond the commonable lands as may be approved by the planning authority, or where that is not possible seek their closure.

The Court will consider the matter further and is reviewing this policy, to ensure that it is still entirely relevant.

However, we agree that the increasing pressures on the Forest, both in the form of damage to the ecology and conflicts with the livestock, all indicate that the time has come for a radical re-think of camping provision in the New Forest. The Court believes there has to be a way of providing the facilities sought and enjoyed by the public, whilst ensuring the Forest is protected and the opportunity for conflict with the livestock is significantly reduced.

It has become increasingly clear that mixing camping with livestock is no longer practical.

RESUMPTION OF OPEN COURT ON 21 JULY 2021

The Verderers are hoping to hold their first Open Court for over a year on 21 July 2021.

In order to allow maximum space for social distancing we propose holding our Open Court at 10 am in the Linden Hall Lyndhurst Community Centre.

We will be asking those present to wear masks save when addressing the Court.

There are of course many uncertainties and we will post further announcements on our website and via our Twitter account as the date draws nearer.