

## MINUTES of the Court of Verderers – Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021

At the time of this Court, the UK outbreak of novel Coronavirus, known as Covid-19 continues. Government advises the population to avoid meetings where the disease could potentially be passed from person to person and homeworking is recommended wherever practical. Once again, the Verderers did not meet in Open Court or in person in Committee.

Items included in these minutes were discussed in a virtual online meeting via 'Zoom'.

The following is a record of proceedings.

PRESENT ONLINE	Lord Manners Mr R Deakin Mr A B Dowsett Dr G Ferris Mr J Greenwood Cllr E Heron Mr R Manley Mr A H Pasmore Mr D Readhead Mrs D Westerhoff	Official Verderer Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer Co-opted Elected Verderer Elected Verderer National Park Appointed Verderer DEFRA Appointed Verderer Senior Elected Verderer Elected Verderer Natural England Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE ONLINE	Miss S Westwood Mr B Rothnie Mr P Grugeon	Clerk to the Verderers Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest Forestry England Land Agent (New Forest)

### 2021/11680 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last Court held on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021 were approved and will be signed by the Official Verderer at the earliest opportunity.

### 2021/11681 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest can be found on the Verderers' website [www.verderers.org.uk](http://www.verderers.org.uk).

No new declarations of interest were made today.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS FOR PUBLICATION

The Announcements & Decisions, as followed, were approved.

#### 2021/11682 CYCLING

In his presentment in March, Mr Peter Rejchrt from Hyde raised concerns about the level of cycling off the permitted tracks in the north of the New Forest. This presentment echoed some of the concerns expressed by the New Forest Equestrian Association in February. The suggestions made by the NFEA will have been noted by Forestry England.

The Verderers share and have often expressed those concerns, as recorded in our Minutes. We of course recognise the many benefits of cycling. However, cyclists must respect the sensitive environment of the landscape and the lawful interests of other users of the Forest. This necessitates sticking to the permitted waymarked routes.

#### 2021/11683 RECREATIONAL PRESSURE

Mr Ward, Chair of the Friends of the New Forest, highlights the impact of the uncontrolled and unmitigated growth of informal recreation. Much has been done by many bodies within the Forest to try to educate visitors to the Forest, both local and from further afield, as to how best to treat and respect this wonderful environment, including the stock. The Forest is a wonderful place to visit and enjoy. Visitors do bring benefits such as the welcome economic benefit to the local economy. However, that benefit comes at an increasingly

heavy price both to the environment and workings of the rural economy. If our visitors are to continue to enjoy the many benefits of visiting the Forest without causing harm, then the messages contained in, for example, the New Forest Code need to be backed by a clear and easily enforceable set of rules to be respected by one and all.

**2021/11684 COMMONING AND THE PUBLIC**

The Ferrett family raise some useful points in their presentments.

The Verderers continue to support the advice that cattle should be dehorned, save where horns are characteristic of the breed. We do not agree that this advice should extend to all cattle.

Whilst a proliferation of signage urbanises the Forest, the Verderers are supportive of some increase in signage in appropriate locations.

Finally, the Verderers are clear that a stock proof fence is one that effectively keeps stock out. We continue to make that clear, as we always have done, to those who fail to ensure that their fencing is in sufficiently good condition to be stock proof.

**PRESENTMENTS**

There were no presentments

**DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS TO BE RECORDED AT THIS COURT**

**2021/11685 DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS**

**RESUME**

The following de-minimis consents were reported and recorded:-

DM0120 – BT Openreach - 55m New Duct in Burley St / Forest Rd, Burley  
DM0121 – BT Openreach - further blockage clearances on Burley V1 & V31

**MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS COURTS OF CONCERN TO FORESTRY ENGLAND**

**2021/11686 MINEHEAD CRICKET CLUB LICENCE RENEWAL**

**RESUME**  
July

Mr Grugeon confirmed he now has received back from the Club, the draft Management Plan and comments on the draft Licence. These he will circulate before the June Court. Mr Greenwood, Mr Pasmore, Mr Readhead and Mrs Westerhoff will scrutinise the documents. The remaining members of the Court are of course welcome to comment.

**JG/AHP/DR/  
DW/PG**

**2021/11687 FOREST CAMPSITES**

**RESUME**

A detailed discussion took place regarding the continuing and worsening conflicts between the campsites and commoning and the campsites and the ecology.

The Court asked Forestry England to confirm the situation regarding the lease. Mr Grugeon replied saying that the lease is for 75 years from 2005. It can only be revoked if Camping in the Forest commits a major breach of the conditions. It is a standard commercial lease.

The Court's view is that it has become clear that campsites on the Open Forest are incompatible with commoning and the SSSI and it was agreed the time has come for serious consideration to be given to re-locating the campsites off the Open Forest.

Whilst fencing may help reduce conflicts between animals and camping, it will do nothing to protect the SSSI and it could result in an even greater negative effect. All those present agreed, were such a proposal to come to the Court it would require a great deal of thought. Temporary fencing would inevitably become permanent.

Forestry England is naturally concerned at any loss of income from the campsites. Such income goes towards paying for essential Forest management and its loss would have a significant effect on the works that can be carried out for the benefit of commoning, the SSSI and access by the public.

Members of the Court will consider possible alternative locations for the campsites.

Action  
All

A solution is needed.

The Official Verderer said he will seek a meeting with the Chairman of the New Forest National Park Authority, given that the NPA's primary purpose is supposed to be conservation. Commoning is an integral part of the Forest's management and heritage.

Action OV

The Official Verderer asked what Camping in the Forest does to improve what it does on the campsites and mitigate the damage and risks. In reply, the Deputy Surveyor said he has received some recent information on what Camping in the Forest is doing to strengthen the messages it communicates to its customers.

2021/11688 VERDERERS' POLICIES

RESUME

The Court will review its policies, particularly with respect to the Forest campsites and the Clerk was asked to circulate a copy of the current policy document.

Action Clerk

2021/11689 CYCLING

RESUME

The Court's serious concern at the lack of control of cyclists who do not stick to the waymarked cycle network was once more expressed in the strongest terms.

The Court asked Forestry England to make further efforts to identify and prosecute the individual who posts videos online which clearly show his illegal activities. In response, the Deputy Surveyor explained the difficulties FE is having and said the advice received from Police solicitors is that data protection regulations preclude the Police from helping to identify the individual. The Court was very unhappy to hear that and it was suggested once again that a private investigator would quickly provide the identification required.

The Deputy Surveyor told the Court that the company Likie-Bikie, which is advertising routes on the Forest for use by electrically assisted bicycles, is strongly promoting the cycling code and sticking to the waymarked cycle network. The legal definition of electric bicycles is that they are not motor vehicles.

Mr Pasmore, however, remained concerned that the use of electrically assisted bicycles, which are capable of significant speeds, is not appropriate on tracks used by families, be they walking or cycling, and other

Forest users such as dog walkers and horse riders. Other members of the Court shared this view.

It was pointed out that the waymarked cycle network routes are not rights of way and Forestry England should, therefore, be able to dictate what type of bicycles are allowed on them. It was suggested that the Verderers' consent for the waymarked cycle network did not include its use by electrically powered bicycles. The Clerk was asked to find the consent.

Action Clerk

Cllr Heron said that ordinary cyclists are capable of reaching speeds of approximately 35 mph which is faster than the 15.5 mph speed reached by electrically assisted bicycles and he said he does not share Mr Pasmore's views.

In response to the suggestion that pressure from cyclists has increased greatly in recent months, the Deputy Surveyor said that observations from his ranger team patrols do not reflect that.

The Court's view is that the need for a Public Space Protection Order is even more urgent. A PSPO would help greatly by dealing with a variety of problems affecting the Forest, not just illegal cycling. The Court urged Forestry England to continue to work on this as a priority.

Action FE

2021/11690 COMMONING AND THE PUBLIC – SIGNAGE GROUP UPDATE

DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett said the generosity of Forestry England and the Court in providing funding for signage is much appreciated. A batch of 16 A-boards is on order. Delivery is imminent. The A-boards will be deployed in car parks which have been identified by the Commoners' Defence Association as the ones where there are the most interactions between stock and the public. It is hoped the Rangers will be able to assist with monitoring the success of the boards, with a view to ordering a further 20 boards if they are shown to be effective. An update will be provided in due course.

2021/11691 PROPOSAL TO RE-FENCE DIBDEN INCLOSURE

RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor confirmed he has the proposals and has had a brief discussion with Jenny Thomas from Natural England. The principle of re-fencing the inclosure is something Natural England may accept but they are not happy with fencing the grazing strip between the A326 and the road.

Mr Deakin said fencing part of the grazing strip is needed in order to provide a safer passage for people walking to the inclosure as opposed to those using cars and parking in the adjacent car park. It is thought that 50% of those visiting the area, do so on foot.

Mr Deakin added that the grazing strip is badly trodden, a fact he said, is borne out by Footprint Ecology's report, and that, together with the presence of a lot of dog faeces, means the ecological value is surely minimal. Mrs Westerhoff disagreed.

Mr Deakin went on to say that the Forest is faced with inordinate pressures and looking at recreation from the commoners' point of view, it is essential that efforts are made to avoid conflicts between the public and commoners' animals. At Dibden, there are a lot of cows with calves as well as ponies and foals and Mr Deakin said that in this instance, it feels like the Court is being prevented from trying to protect commoning and the public. Further joint discussion is required.

Action  
DS/JT(NE)/  
RD

2021/11692 FORESTRY ENGLAND INCLOSURE FENCING – LONG TERM STRATEGY PLAN RESUME

Mr Deakin and Head Agister Jonathan Gerrelli met with Jonathan Blanco-Diaz from Forestry England to peruse and discuss maps of the inclosures. The Head Agister is liaising with local Agisters. A set of drawings will shortly be available showing the fences which Forestry England requires for continued forestry operations and those which are needed to facilitate catching stock. Who will be responsible for maintaining the latter, has yet to be agreed.

Action RD

#### SSSI RESTORATION WORKS INCLUDING THE ENHANCEMENT LIST

2021/11693 ENHANCEMENT LIST RESUME

Noted.

2021/11694 RESTORATION OF TURF HILL RESUME

The Official Verderer reported that the HLS team has been provided with a new suggestion as to how best to remove the ridge and furrow which has been left, as well as continuing with stump shearing.

#### ISSUES REPORTED TO FORESTRY ENGLAND (ACTION LIST)

2021/11695 Noted. Nothing to add. RESUME

#### OTHER AGENDA ITEMS INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

2021/11696 LETTERS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER CANDIDATES RE AVERAGE SPEED CAMERAS AND THE ROGER PENNY WAY RESUME

Two responses were received. One suggested money will never be available. Mrs Donna Jones, said she would get in touch if she was elected to the position. She has and the Official Verderer will, therefore, write to her again congratulating her on her success and inviting her to meet, on the road. Cllr Heron said he believes Mrs Jones has already been to look.

Action OV

2021/11697 BT OPENREACH PROPOSED DUCT AND CABLING ON THE DISUSED RAILWAY LINE AT HOLMSLEY DISCHARGE

This proposal, which will subsequently enable the removal of 26 telegraph poles from the open Forest as well as up to Holmsley Lodge, was welcomed and approved, subject to the usual three conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions and compensation for loss of grazing.

2021/11698 STALLION LUCKY LANE PEGASUS DISCHARGE

A number of clearly orchestrated complaints have been received by email, from riders who claim they have experienced difficulties with Lucky Lane Pegasus, the stallion allocated to the Beaulieu Aerodrome area of the Forest.

Mr Deakin put his views to the Court as follows:-

'A stated primary objective of the Verderers is to protect and administer the New Forest's unique agricultural practices, and to safeguard a viable future for those practices upon which the Forest special qualities depend.

As landowners, Forestry England has responsibility for the SSSI designated areas which have legal protection. The maintenance of those areas depends completely upon commoners' animals grazing.

The New Forest National Park Authority has statutory purposes and responsibilities to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.

All bodies have a vested joint interest and duty to safeguard the future of traditional commoning and the New Forest pony herd. These bodies should be actively supporting the turnout of Pegasus.

We constantly talk about recreational pressures, and the impacts upon Commoning. Damage to grazing, disturbance to stock, difficulties managing stock, feeding stock causing aggression, limiting calf turnout, dog worrying, fewer drifts, and increasing damages claims from the public. All of these and other pressures are making the future of traditional commoning activities very uncertain and unattractive. Now we are facing pressure to limit stallion turnout of animals exhibiting natural behaviour, because it inconveniences recreational activities. The complainants are all local residents, some with common rights, not day visitors. It clearly illustrates the scale of the public education challenge. If we agree to this, it will not stop at one stallion, there are usually several relatively minor stallion incidents each year. A natural eventual consequence of bowing to such pressure would be an "off forest" bred herd, which would not provide the necessary numbers or free ranging ponies which access the more remote areas, and would probably result in many very quiet nuisance ponies.

I know that it is a well-used cliché that Recreation is likely to destroy everything that attracted it here in the first place, but it is difficult to argue that it is not true. We cannot deny the public some enjoyment of the Forest, and have to accept that it is necessary that we adapt and evolve, but if we allow Traditional Commoning to become unviable and unsustainable then all will be lost. There is a significant threat that this will happen.

Could I ask what has happened to the 22 actions promised by the RMS Chairman quite some time ago? 22 inactions would appear to be a more appropriate description of this NFNPA initiative.

Finally, we should not lose sight of the fact that at the centre of this stallion debate is the owner, who does not want to give in to inappropriate recreational pressure, but of course would be first in line should an incident result in a future claim against him. The easiest course of action for the owner would be to withdraw the stallion. Forestry England and the Verderers would be next in line, with the NFNPA nowhere.'

Members of the Court, including the Deputy Surveyor and Mr Grugeon had been provided with the text of the emails received, although for data protection reasons, the identities of the correspondents were redacted and they were identified by their initials only.

The complainants all report the stallion has run up to them when they are out riding. In some cases, the riders chose to flee and as would be expected from any stallion, Pegasus followed them until he was satisfied they had moved away from his mares.

Pegasus reportedly acted in the same manner on a couple of occasions last year when, on two separate occasions, he was tested by the Agisters, who reported that if a rider shouted at the stallion and waved a stick at him, he retreated. Pegasus is a stallion who is very friendly and easy to handle in hand. He shows no interest in walkers, with or without dogs. He is used to people and has never shown any sign of aggression.

The stallion area list was published approximately a week before the stallions were due to be turned out and the emails were received very shortly afterwards. The emails clearly indicate an orchestrated campaign from a group of riders who all keep their horses/ponies on the same property and who all ride out from Furzey Lane, Beaulieu. Complaints have not been received from any other riders.'

Mr Grugeon asked that due consideration be given to any health and safety issues and his advice was felt to be helpful.

After much careful consideration of the information provided both in the emails which were copied to them and the discussions this morning, members of the Court did not accept that this stallion is dangerous or mischievous. For that reason, the Court has no legal basis on which to refuse the stallion permission to be turned out and it was agreed, unanimously, that Lucky Lane Pegasus should be turned out on Beaulieu Aerodrome as intended.

An announcement will be drafted and published on the website prior to the stallion going out. Emails will be sent to the people who have complained about the stallion and general advice will be offered. This will be done by Friday evening.

Action  
OV/RD/JG/  
Clerk

Within a short period of being turned out, Lucky Lane Pegasus will be tested again by the local Agister on horseback.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND**

2021/11699 PROVISION OF TEMPORARY PORTALOO AT PITMORE LANE RECREATION GROUND, SWAY DISCHARGE

The Parish Council requested permission to site a Portaloo on a temporary basis, from later this week for a period of two weeks, for use by children using the pitch as part of organised sports training and matches.

The Portaloo will be sited behind the shed inside the hedge, and kept locked when unsupervised.

The Court was happy to grant consent for this subject to the three usual conditions and of course Forestry England's approval.

2021/11700 BURNING PROGRAMME DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin thanked Forestry England for undertaking a successful burning programme this year. In terms of area, approximately 70% of planned sites were addressed.

2021/11701 REINSTATEMENT FOLLOWING TIMBER EXTRACTION WITHIN DISCHARGE  
THROWN OPEN INCLOSURES

Concern was expressed that in some areas, the damage caused by timber extraction within thrown open inclosures is excessive and needs to be repaired. The area near the Roundhill Campsite entrance road is one example. Repairs have been carried out to most rides but the areas which were planted have been left. It was pointed out that the stock has to be managed in these areas and the very deep ruts that have been left are dangerous. More general reinstatement is needed. The Deputy Surveyor will investigate.

Action DS

2021/11702 ILLEGAL OVERNIGHT PARKING DISCHARGE

Two campervans have been seen on a regular basis, parked up overnight in the Hilltop/Blackfield area. At Gatebridge, a green van is seen virtually every night. The occupant is thought to be working nearby.

Action FE

**The Deputy Surveyor and Mr Grugeon left the meeting**

**Mr Manley gave his apologies and also left the meeting**

#### **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS COURTS**

2021/11703 CAMPSITES DISCHARGE

A further discussion took place. The Clerk was asked to ensure Campsites are on the Agenda for the next Court.

Action Clerk

2021/11704 VERDERERS' LIVESTOCK OFFICER RESUME

Dr Ferris produced a paper outlining the proposed role and costs of a livestock officer. The post is intended to provide an additional resource focussed on livestock related issues and assisting the Agisters both practically and by educating the public.

Mr Pasmore said he does not agree that such a post should be introduced. His view is that controlling the public and education does not fall within the jurisdiction of the Court. Cllr Heron was quick to disagree, saying that the Court challenges other bodies to deal with the various serious issues facing the Forest and that the Court should adapt to the challenges and assist if it can.

Dr Ferris explained that in preparing his paper, he discussed the proposal with the Head Agister who feels that in general, if the right person is employed, they could be useful.

It was agreed therefore, that an advertisement should appear on the Court's website. A subgroup will be formed to take this forward, working with Dr Ferris.

Action GF

#### **ENCROACHMENTS NOT INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND**

2021/11705 ENCROACHMENT AT PICKET HILL/SHOBLEY RESUME

This matter is ongoing.



## OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

2021/11706 CATTLE & ONGOING CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE CDA DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer and Dr Ferris had a useful meeting with the chair and vice chair of the CDA. They discussed ways of working together and improving communications.

2021/11707 DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION DISCUSSED AT COURT MEETINGS DISCHARGE

It was accepted that it would be helpful if the Court minutes can be agreed quicker, even if they are not formally approved. The Clerk said she can usually prepare the minutes by the Friday of the week of the meeting. It was suggested a shorter deadline for comments should be trialled.

Action  
Clerk/All

2021/11708 FUTURE FUNDING FOR THE FOREST RESUME

Work continues to try to secure a new scheme appropriate to the Forest. ELMS test and trial is not currently being undertaken in either of the two southern National Parks.

Action OV

2021/11709 COMMONERS' CENSUS DISCHARGE

The census was last carried out 10 years ago. The HLS is unable to pay for an update. The CDA Chair does not believe it is a priority. It was agreed, therefore, to leave this for the time being.

2021/11710 POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF OPEN COURTS RESUME

The Official Verderer said he would like to aim to hold an Open Court in July, in Lyndhurst Community Centre, which has a large airy hall. The Clerk confirmed the hall is available and is being held, pending today's discussion. She will confirm the booking later today.

Action Clerk

Clr Heron suggested it may be preferable to hold the following committee remotely in the afternoon.

Details will be confirmed in June when the final easing of Covid restrictions should have been implemented.

## HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME (HLS)

2021/11711 HLS BOARD RESUME

The minutes will be published on the HLS website shortly.

Action OV

## VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME (VGS)

2021/11712 QUALIFYING PERIOD FOR CATTLE DISCHARGE

Responsible cattle owners who overwinter cattle on their holdings will delay turning out until grass arrives on the Forest and they also get their cattle in before the acorns fall. With a late spring, that turnout window could be from early June until mid-September, less than 4 months. Such good practice should not be penalised.

In view of the very dry weather conditions this spring, with next to no grass on the Forest, it was suggested the qualifying period for cattle entered into

the VGS should be reduced from 4 months to 3 months. It was agreed that this suggestion be put to the VGS Management Committee. It should apply to this year only.

Action OV

## GENERAL REPORTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

### 2021/11713 ROADSIDE FENCING

DISCHARGE

Unfortunately, there are issues with roadside fencing again. The Clerk said the office is doing what it can to chivvy up HCC. Cllr Heron offered to assist and the Clerk said she will provide him with details of outstanding defects.

Action  
EH/Clerk

### 2021/11714 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR

RESUME

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Forest Ponies	4583	4632
Forest Cattle	1945	3520
Forest Donkeys	117	132
Forest Pigs	0	0
Forest Sheep	0	0
Total Forest Stock	6645	8284
Common Ponies	644	561
Common Cattle	1596	1311
Common Donkeys	57	43
Common Pigs	68	73
Common Sheep	194	223
Total Common Stock	2559	2211
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	6645	8284
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	2297	1915
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	8942	10199
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	9204	10495

Mr Deakin said he will not be surprised if marking fees for cattle reduce as commoners will no longer need receipts for their BPS claims. Once the TB testing window opens and so long as Covid-restrictions permit, the Agisters will go back to marking cattle.

### 2021/11715 AGISTERS' VEHICLES

RESUME

Mr Readhead said a range of prices has been obtained for various vehicles. A vehicle was supplied for the Agisters to trial. The feedback is that nothing comes up to the workability of the Land Rover Defender. The new Defender is, however, very expensive.

The Official Verderer asked for a brief paper to be provided for the next Court so that a decision can be made on the best way forward.

Action  
Vehicle Sub-  
Cttee

The question of whether the Court should be registered for VAT, in order to be able to reclaim VAT on the acquisition of the new vehicles and other costs is under discussion with the Auditors.

Action OV

### 2021/11716 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

RESUME

The financial statement was noted.

2021/11717 CONDITION OF STOCK – REPORT FROM THE HEAD AGISTER

RESUME

'This Spring has not been very kind to us. April was one of the driest and coldest on record, and nothing much has grown on the forest. It looks as bare out there as I can remember seeing it. This has impacted seriously on the condition of stock, and the ponies are not picking up at the moment. There are a lot of borderline condition ponies and we are still removing those that are below the standard. I have seen a number of mares heavy in foal that will need careful checking once foaled.

The biggest and most disappointing issue we are dealing with are animals being turned out too early, in barely acceptable condition with little food available, or actually in poor condition. This has been predominantly but not exclusively cattle. Some animals put out by commoners have been in a really terrible condition which they should be ashamed of. This has led to a lot of unnecessary work and hassle for the Agisters, and much time spent by us and a number of Verderers on inspection visits looking at these animals.

To date, all the cattle that we have asked to be taken off have been, probably close to 60 animals from 6 or more owners.

Animals will lose condition and some will get poor while on the Forest for a variety of reasons, but there is no excuse for turning them out like that. I would like to thank the Verderers for the support and time they have given, particularly the staff committee chairman, in assisting the Agisters in dealing with these issues.

On a positive note, the large herd of cattle in the South of the Forest with the TB issues have gone clear on their latest test. If they go clear on the next test in 60 days, then restrictions can start to be lifted. And it has finally rained and got a little warmer! Fingers crossed the grass will now grow!

Mr Deakin also remarked that the condition of some cattle is disappointing. He said the inspections of some herds by Verderers as well as Agisters has been very helpful. The CDA is aware of what has been going on.

**Cllr Heron gave his apologies and left the meeting**

2021/11718 ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT REPORT FOR APRIL

RESUME

The Agisters attended 4 accidents in April, compared with 1 in the same period last year.

1 pony and 1 cow were injured and in two instances the animals involved could not be found.

1 accident occurred in twilight, and the other 3 in the dark.

All drivers reported having been involved in an accident.

The total number of commoners' animals killed and injured in 2021 to date is 7, compared with 18 in the same period last year.

**TRAINING & HEALTH & SAFETY**

2021/11719 YOUNG COMMONERS HOT BRANDING TRAINING SESSION DISCHARGE

The Young Commoners ran a hot branding training session which was attended by around 10 commoners. Approximately 30 animals were branded.

Agister Robert Maton was present to assist with the training and the VGS Administrator, Tina Woodley, also attended to ensure the event was Covid-compliant and secure. She provided PPE and ensured she obtained details from those attending for the purposes of track and trace, should it be needed. This training has increased the number of commoners who are competent in hot branding.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

2021/11720 OPEN FOREST MEETING DISCHARGE

A meeting has been arranged, by Natural England, to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> May at 10.30 a.m. in The Queen's House garden with the Verderers' Hall as a backup if the weather is inclement, as it is large enough to socially distance.

On the agenda for discussion is:-

- Bracken management issues following the ban on the use of Asulox
- Ban on burning of blanket bogs in the uplands
- Timing of burning
- Scrub and tree management and public perception

A number of Verderers indicated they would like to attend.

2021/11721 VERDERERS' ELECTION RESUME

Mr Pasmore raised the question of confidentiality and Data Protection in relation to the Electoral Register. Mr Pasmore said the number of commoners and eligible residents who are on the Register to vote has decreased significantly in recent years and he felt the only way to increase interest is by direct approach to those who have not registered their interest. However, the Clerk has expressed concern that providing a copy of the register in its entirety, especially in electronic form, could breach GDPR regulations. The document is of course on public display in the weeks before the Election and so Mr Pasmore thought it odd that copies cannot be made available. It was agreed the question should be raised with the Under Sheriff.

Action  
OV/Clerk

2021/11722 DRIFTS DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin said that it is hoped that the drifts will run as normal this year and therefore a drift list has been produced. The Clerk will circulate a copy.

Action Clerk

**There being no further business, the video conference ended at 14:15 hrs.**

*Jun Mann  
16 June 2021*