

VERDERERS' COURT

MARCH 2022

Announcements and Decisions

Welcome

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all back to our first Open Court in the Verderers' Hall since March 2020. Thank you for coming. Although life will never be quite the same again, I hope that we will be able to continue to hold all our Open Courts here where they should be held.

When the Court moves into committee at the end of the Open Court today, we are going to hold our meeting here in the Hall rather than in the rather cramped confines of the library in Queen's House. Therefore, once the Court is closed, I ask that people vacate the Hall promptly, so that we can move swiftly into committee.

Using Behavioural insights to assist the management of people and animals in the New Forest (Sarah Norris)

I would like to thank Sarah Norris for her most interesting presentment on using nudge techniques.

We and Forestry England are keen to learn more and we are setting up a meeting to understand how these techniques might best be deployed in the Forest.

Bramshaw Celebratory Tree protective fencing

We have considered carefully Bramshaw Parish Council's presentment seeking consent for a much larger tree protection enclosure on the Open Forest. We noted that it is larger than those used successfully in Pound Lane Burley. We have made a number of suggestions to Bramshaw Parish Council whilst making it clear that the Verderers will not consent to the larger enclosure.

Tally Ho Restaurant Site on the A31 at Stoney Cross

At our last Court, Mrs Gray asked whether something could be done about the eyesore that is the site of this former restaurant. Regaining legal and physical control of this site has been difficult and time-consuming to achieve. However, I am glad to report that the site has been cleared and the area fenced. In due course, we hope it will be brought into the Forest. I am sure that we are all grateful to the various organisations responsible for this challenging task including the Police, Forestry England, England Highways, the National Park Authority and New Forest District Council.

Network Rail compensation land at Norley Wood

No objections were received in respect of the presentment made on behalf of the Deputy Surveyor at our January Court, to exchange an area of land at Woodfidley, for a parcel of land at Norley Wood. The land is required by Network Rail for an essential extension to a trackside substation. The Verderers therefore gave consent for this land exchange.

Visit by Lord Benyon

Last Thursday, on the joint invitation of the Verderers and the National Park Authority, we welcomed Lord Benyon, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on his first visit to the Forest since becoming once again, a Government Minister. We visited a commoner's holding and walked him around Acres Down where he was shown some examples of the extra ordinary biodiversity of the Forest. A visit to Fletchers Thorns followed where he was very impressed with the quality of the stream restoration which he had first seen shortly after it was completed. Lunch at the Verderers Hall followed where he met a range of people involved in commoning and the management of the Forest including representatives from the Forest Farming Group. I am confident that the Minister well understood the importance of commoning to delivering and maintaining the biodiversity of the Forest. I am hopeful too that our discussions about the shape of a future Environmental Land Management Scheme for the Forest will result in a scheme that both fits and benefits the unique needs and characteristics of the Forest.