

**Minutes of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 9.30 a.m.  
in the Verderers Hall, the King's House, Lyndhurst**

PRESENT	Mr E Heron	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Dr G Ferris	Co-opted Elected Verderer
	Mr A H Pasmore	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mr R Stride	Elected Verderer
	Mr C Chatters	Natural England Appointed Verderer
	Mr M Gammon	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Miss A Sevier MBE	National Park Appointed Verderer
	Mr R Manley	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mr D Readhead	Elected Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister
APOLOGIES	None	

**IN COMMITTEE in the Library**

2024/13558	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	RESUME
	The minutes of the last Court, held on Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2024 were approved, and signed by the Official Verderer.	
2024/13559	NEW DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	RESUME
	There were no new declarations of interest.	
2024/13560	CONDITION OF STOCK	RESUME
	The Head Agister reported that he is pleased with the overall condition of stock. The weather is helping with the intermittent rain ensuring the grass keeps growing. There is a lot of food on the Forest.	
	As always, a few (mostly older) mares and mares with foals are not looking as well as they should at this time of year, and these animals are being removed as and when necessary.	
	The majority of the cattle are now out but a couple of large herds will be turned out shortly.	
2024/13561	STRANGLES	RESUME
	Strangles has been seen at Fritham and Longcross in recent weeks and now also at Woodgreen, on Godshill Cricket Pitch and in Pittswood as well as on a private holding in the area. In addition, there are cases in North Gorley. It is mostly young ponies, (not foals) which are affected. The outbreak may affect the drifts which will not take place in areas where strangles is clearly evident. The Agisters are monitoring the situation carefully.	
	It was agreed a post should be put on Social Media advising the public that there is strangles in these areas on the Forest and reiterating the veterinary advice that the Court always follows – i.e. leave animals with strangles alone unless they are very sick and	Action Clerk

need veterinary intervention. Most ponies recover well and at this time of year, when most are in good condition, it is not usually a serious problem.

2024/13562 TB RESUME

A meeting with APHA has been arranged, for Monday 19<sup>th</sup> August.

The cattle in the Boldre area went clear on their second TB test. The herd is therefore now classified as TB free. No radial testing was required.

**The Head Agister left the meeting**

2024/13563 MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR RESUME

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Forest Ponies	4824	4817
Forest Cattle	1962	2658
Forest Donkeys	118	104
Forest Pigs	0	0
Forest Sheep	0	0
Total Forest Stock	6904	7579
Common Ponies	564	588
Common Cattle	456	1177
Common Donkeys	93	98
Common Pigs	17	22
Common Sheep	121	152
Total Common Stock	1251	2037
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	6904	7579
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	1113	2037
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	8017	9442
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	8155	9616

2024/13564 STOCK NUMBERS DISCHARGE

Cattle numbers are down, however calves are no longer marked as soon as they are born, with commoners leaving it until the date stipulated in the byelaws. Due to the changes in support for farming, the number of animals for which marking fees are being paid this year probably more accurately reflects the numbers actually turned out. It is known that several commoners have drastically reduced their cattle numbers or even stopped turning out cattle completely. The Clerk was asked to obtain some data comparing cattle numbers last year with this year.

Action Clerk

2024/13565 BREACHES OF THE BYELAWS RESUME

One commoner's marking fees are outstanding. The Clerk has written to the only address on record for them, but to date they have not responded.

## OPEN COURT

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr Craig Harrison, Deputy Surveyor  
Mrs Joan Clark

**The Head Agister opened the Court with the usual proclamation.**

### ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS

#### 2024/13566 MOBILE REFRESHMENT SALES

Discussions with Forestry England are continuing as respects the mobile refreshment units, in an effort to find ways to minimise interactions between legally depastured commoners' animals and members of the public purchasing food and drink.

#### 2024/13567 ROAD CROSSINGS ON THE A35 AND A337

We discussed Mr Greenwood's presentment concerning Hampshire County Council's removal of certain gates on the fenced roads. The County Council has liaised with the Agisters and the Clerk regarding gates in the fenced roads in so far as any proposed changes may impact stock management. This has primarily related to ensuring that gates are retained and maintained to enable Agisters to return any escapees back into the Forest.

Any concerns regarding public use, other than by Commoners for the management of their stock, should be addressed either to the County Council directly or raised through the New Forest Access Forum.

#### 2024/13568 SUPPORT FOR THE AGISTERS & COMMONERS

We welcomed Miss Moore's comments on the Agisters. An Employee Assistance Programme is already in place for all staff.

We write and thank individuals who have gone above and beyond to help the Agisters at the drifts.

Both Jonathan Gerrelli and Robert Maton have been nominated for the Heathcote Award in recognition of their long service as New Forest Agisters, and commoners Mr Mike Eccles and Mr James Young have been nominated for the New Forest Trust's Diamond Jubilee Award for their work on the illegal encroachment at Shobley. These awards will all be made at the New Forest Show this year.

We agree strongly that it is important to pro-actively reward people who go above and beyond for the Forest. However, we do not feel it is necessary for the Court to offer its own award, as there are many awards already in the public eye which are important for the whole Forest community.

#### 2024/13569 NEW FOREST SHOW

The Court will again be attending the New Forest Show this year and I encourage you to visit our Verderers stand in the Heart of the Forest area. We will of course be highlighting the Election this year and encouraging people to sign up to vote.

## **PRESENTATION**

### **2024/13570 THE ROWL KITCHER CUP**

The Rowl Kitcher Cup was kindly donated some years ago by Mr Rowl Kitcher's family. The Cup is awarded each year to the owner of the highest scoring young colt at the stallion inspections held in the spring and to qualify for the cup, the colt has to be selected for inclusion in the Verderers' Stallion Scheme.

This year we held the stallion and colt inspections again, at Beaulieu Road, and, for the second year running, the Rowl Kitcher Cup has been won by Knavesash Duty who was the highest scoring young colt presented to the Verderers for selection. Knavesash Duty is owned by Miss Kate Robb who is here today to receive the Rowl Kitcher cup which will be presented by Elected Verderer and Chairman of the Verderers' Stallion Sub-Committee, Mr Richard Deakin. It is particularly fitting that Richard should present the cup, as he is Rowl Kitcher's nephew.

## **ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT**

### **2024/13571 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR JUNE 2024**

The Agisters attended 3 accidents in June compared with 6 in June last year.

1 pony foal was injured and had to be destroyed, 1 pony and 1 cow were uninjured.

2 accidents occurred in daylight, the other happened in the dark.

The motorist who hit the foal has not come forward.

The total number of commoners animals killed and injured this year is 9. That compares with 17 in the same period last year.

## **PRESENTMENT BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR**

### **2024/13572 PANNAGE 2024**

In accordance with the provisions of Section 7 of the New Forest Act 1964, the Verderers have been consulted on the dates of the pannage season. I notify the Court that the 2024 season will commence on Monday 16th September and end on Friday 22nd November, both dates inclusive.

May I remind Commoners who hold the right of Common of Mast that:-

1. Pigs turned out must be levant and couchant in and upon the land from which the right is derived.
2. Pigs may not be turned out until they have been inspected by an Agister, effectively ringed, marked and the appropriate fee paid. This must take place during normal working hours. 48 hours notice must be given and the time and place where the pigs are to be inspected and marked must be agreed.
3. Pigs must be marked before they are put onto the Forest.
4. Pigs may not be turned out into the Inclosures.

5. Breeding sows, that is female pigs in-pig, may be allowed the privilege of remaining on the Open Forest after the end of the pannage season if so authorised in writing by the Deputy Surveyor for the period specified in the consent.
6. Any breeding sow that is granted the specific written consent of exercising the privilege must be inspected, ringed, marked and paid for during the pannage season.
7. Any breeding sow exercising this privilege must return to the holding at night.
8. Apart from the aforementioned privilege of turning out breeding sows with proper authorisation onto the Open Forest beyond the pannage season, no pig will be allowed to remain on the Forest after the end of the season.
9. No period of grace is allowed for the removal of such unauthorised pigs.
10. Any consent granted for the exercise of the privilege is limited to the period following this particular pannage season and cannot be presumed to apply for future years, for which a separate application must be made.
11. Any unmarked animal running on the Forest does so in contravention of the Verderers' Byelaws and the owner is liable to a fine of up to £200.00.
12. Property owners of land adjacent to the Forest are reminded that it is their responsibility to fence out Forest animals from their land.

## PRESENTMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

2024/13573 OP MOUNTIE  
Presentment by Gilly Jones

'On the first of July we did our latest Operation Mountie. We started at 6.30 am at Hawkhill. In two hours, there we caught 18 drivers speeding. The top speed there was 57mph. 12 of these drivers were local, and I mean very local to that road. Most of them do that route daily. Several were businesses or works vans. One van driver works for a company who really should know better.

The usual excuses were dragged out. 'Oh, I'm late for work' 'I was chatting to my friend' 'I was too busy looking out for ponies, that I didn't look at my speedo' But the best had to be 'I have driven across the Forest for 13 years and never seen a pony' We moved over to Kings Hat, where we caught another 12 drivers. Here was where things changed. One driver was clocked at 76mph. He was on his way to work as a chef but tested positive for drugs at the roadside.

Of these 30 drivers, 3 were Commoners. For the Police, the FE and NPA staff and myself this was frustrating to say the least. What was worse, was being told by one of them that we should be out there stopping the people that run over ponies.

I made the decision to put the fact on social media. I got some really quite abusive messages from people who had the nerve to tell me I should shut up and support Commoners. I think I do enough to support them by trying to reduce the number of accidents involving their stock. The RTA figures we have just heard indicates what we are doing might be working.

At the last court the Official Verderer said he was hoping to have a meeting with Donna Jones, the PCC. I have asked that I can attend some of that meeting, to update her on the operation and convey our thanks to the Officers who work so hard for us.

I always try to end on a positive, but this time, I am struggling. I hope that being caught speeding is a wake-up call to some people.'

2024/13574 DRIFTS  
Presentment by Gilly Jones

'As this is the last court before the Drift season starts, I would like to make a few requests.

Firstly, to the public, and to visitors' sites.

Drifts are probably one of the most important events in the Commoner year.

As our visitor numbers increase, we all work hard to try and make sure they go safely for everyone. If you are a venue, please, when there is a drift in your area, please remind your guests to obey the signage and guidance give by people on the ground. If they are actually on the ground, the drift has not gone to plan!

More than once we have had drifts disrupted by dog walkers, cyclists and people wanting to watch. Drivers who are too impatient to wait is also a problem.

Most people do understand, but some just need that little bit more advice.

It's never fun as a walker on a drift to be ignored, swore at or threatened, and these 3 have all happened to me personally.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the Forestry England volunteers who attend some of the busier drifts. I attended a meeting this week with Agister Robert Maton (thought it best not to call him Agister Maton senior) And we received feedback from the Volunteers, who let's remember, are just that, Volunteers. They sign up to help on these drifts, giving their time to help the whole process go smoothly. Their help is invaluable, they are used to dealing with the public, and they do a sterling job on drift day.

Having to tell a group of cyclists they can't do their planned route, remind local residents today is the day they need to walk their dogs somewhere else is hard enough.

But being chastised by people taking part in the drift is unacceptable. They are there doing a job, helping us to keep the drifts safe.

I am not sure I should say this next statement, but it's me, and of course I will. One lady said to me 'I love helping out on the drifts and I consider myself an Agister groupie' Read into that what you want.

So please if you are attending a drift, be kind. A quick Thank You might go a long way.'

2024/13575 THE FUTURE FOR YOUNG COMMONERS  
Presentment by Master Will Parry-Norton

'My name is Will Parry-Norton, I'm 13 and I'm a new forest commoner.

Having seen and heard what is happening, and my dad's involvement within the forest, in my own words I would like to express my concerns for my future.

My ambition is to follow the legacy of the commoning tradition within my family; I wish to turn out livestock such as ponies and cattle, and contribute towards preserving this unique landscape and heritage, following in the footsteps of my dad.

At this point in time, i am worried I may not be able to for fill these ambitions for a number of reasons.

As I get older, I will have to deal with the following pressures;

Land and house prices are at an all time high, and are only looking to get higher and higher. This means that young commoners like me are very unlikely to be able to afford our own holdings by ourselves.

Visitor numbers are rapidly increasing, and the risk of interaction with our livestock is ever growing. This could not only result in putting tourists at danger, but could further result in myself being sued and the animal being taken off the forest, and possibly getting put down. The loss of our animals is not only a financial loss, but a deeply emotional loss too, for the commoners and their families.

Finally, I would like to ask the verderers to remember that as a young commoner, we need a viable and secure future to be able to continue commoning.

I am proud to be a commoner, and I hope I always will be.

Thank you for listening to my presentment.'

2024/13576 ROAD CROSSINGS ON THE ROADS  
Presentment by Mr Greenwood

Mr Greenwood commented on the gate at Ironshill which he believes was removed by HCC without consent. He said it did serve a purpose for commoning as he used it to cross the road on his horse whilst out checking stock. He said he is concerned it now seems to be classified as use for public access only.

2024/13577 STALLIONS AND GELDINGS IN THE NEW FOREST  
Presentment by Mr Greenwood

'As a stallion owner I am aware of the problems which geldings can cause during the short period when stallions are in the Forest. The stallions carry out a vital role in maintaining a high quality herd of pure bred New Forest ponies and a great deal of effort and expense is put into establishing and maintaining a stud of suitable stallions. In the recent past some geldings were kept by commoners in order to increase entitlement to support payments, however, under current funding arrangements, both from the RPA and the VGS many geldings are of no economic value to the owner or benefit to the Forest, although I believe that young geldings can have a place in the Forest and that they make better riding ponies as result, whilst also increasing in value.

I acknowledge and support the right of commoners to depasture any permitted equine however I believe that commoners have a better chance of external financial support if the Forest is regarded as a viable foundation area for breeding a nucleus of quality ponies of a local native breed. The New Forest pony is currently in the RBST at risk category.

There are large dominant geldings which keep a herd of "their" mares, these mares never go to find a stallion. I recently looked at a group of 12 ponies in the Forest, of these 5 were geldings. They create a problem when trying to catch other ponies.

I have a video of a stallion being unable to get to a mare because a gelding was determinedly circling the mare to keep the stallion away. The gelding then attacked the stallion so it left the area. This is a common occurrence.

There were serious injuries to stallions this year and although it is not possible to say categorically these injuries were caused by geldings the stallions were known to have been attacked in some cases. Some injuries resulted in large vet bills for the owner and all stallion owners are having to accept an additional avoidable risk.

The verderers bylaw 10d places an obligation on the owners of animals depastured in the Forest not to allow animals which are known or suspected by the owner or the verderers to be vicious, mischievous, or likely to cause injury to any person or animal to be at large.

This is not a new problem, in 1963 the CDA and Pony Breeders complained that geldings of five years and more were preventing stallions from getting mares in foal. The verderers replied that Byelaw 10 could be used in that event. The difference today is that I believe there to be far more geldings in the forest and also that in 1963 109 stallions were approved, many of which were permanently depastured.

I suggest an announcement reminding gelding owners of the problems which geldings can cause is made next March when known and potentially troublesome geldings may be easier to catch.'

**The Head Agister closed the Court**

**IN COMMITTEE (in the Library)**

**CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS**

2024/13578	OP MOUNTIE	DISCHARGE
	The Court is disappointed to hear that some people have been abusive to those who are involved with Op Mountie. Abuse is unacceptable. The OV said he is happy for Gilly to attend part of his meeting with the PCC.	Action OV
2024/13579	DRIFTS	DISCHARGE
	The Court does not condone abusive behaviour by anyone. It was agreed that during their talk at the beginning of the day, Agisters should remind everyone attending the drifts of the need to be as polite and courteous as possible to anyone they may encounter. Walkers and riders do need to be aware, however, that adrenaline may run high and depending on the circumstances there may not always be time for niceties! Anyone with concerns will be asked to raise them with a Verderer or Agister at the time.	Action RD



2024/13580	THE FUTURE FOR YOUNG COMMONERS	DISCHARGE
	Master Parry Norton succinctly highlighted three longstanding issues which the Court work has, for some years, been working hard to address.	
2024/13581	ROAD CROSSINGS ON THE FENCED ROADS	DISCHARGE
	The issue raised by Mr Greenwood was discussed by the Staff Committee. The Agisters have no objection to the removal of the gate at Ironshill.	
2024/13582	STALLIONS AND GELDINGS	DISCHARGE
	The Court agreed geldings can cause problems when the stallions are turned out. However, some commoners choose to keep geldings, as they are entitled to do.	
	If the necessary evidence is provided, troublesome geldings may be dealt with under the byelaws. Of the four stallions which were injured this year, only one is known to have been involved in an incident with a gelding.	
	An announcement will be drafted for March next year, advising gelding owners that they will be asked to remove any gelding which evidence proves is interfering with a stallion.	Action RD

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

2024/13583	PROCEDURES	RESUME
	The OV is drafting a paper.	Action OV
2024/13584	DENNY LODGE WATER SUPPLY	DISCHARGE
	The Court has approved the route for the new pipe. Mrs Clark will advise the Clerk when the design has been decided. If there are any material changes, the proposals will be added to the Court Agenda.	
	Mrs Clark confirmed that when the old tank is decommissioned, it will be imploded and the ground levelled off.	
2024/13585	FOREST BRIDGES	RESUME
	The Court remains concerned that some bridges which are essential for stock management may be rendered unsuitable for horse riders. It was pointed out that some small bridges have always been used by riders.	
	The DS will share the details of the review that is being undertaken, after which further discussion may be needed.	Action DS

2024/13586	FORESTRY ENGLAND FIRE FIGHTING PROCEDURE	DISCHARGE
	FE's revised position statement will be shared.	Action DS/Clerk
	Management to prevent wild fires by undertaking prescribed burning will continue.	
	The Fire Brigade always takes charge in the event of a large fire.	

#### SUBMISSIONS FROM FORESTRY ENGLAND

2024/13587	HATCHET POND FISH SCREEN	DISCHARGE
	The DS confirmed that constructing a fish screen down river, out of the Forest, was explored but found to be impractical. The proposal to construct a fish screen in the outflow from the pond was therefore agreed. The Court asked to be advised when the handover takes place so a check can be made to ensure there are no hazards to commoners' stock. This was agreed and the DS will advise the team involved in the project to make sure this is done.	Action DS
2024/13588	INSTALLATION OF WATER LEVEL MONITORING, POST RERSTORATION, IN THE LYMINGTON RIVER CATCHMENT	DISCHARGE
	The proposals were approved for the 2 year period requested, after which the monitors must be removed unless further consent is sought and agreed.	
2024/13589	PROPOSED ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG AT THORNEY HILL	DISCHARGE
	The Court stipulated this work must be undertaken by a responsible body, its identity not being clear in the proposal document. The Court agreed the proposals in principle but requested further details which the DS undertook to obtain and share. It was agreed that final approval can be made by email.	Action DS
	The site is known to contain a significant amount of broken glass and potentially other rubbish. The Court stipulated that any such rubbish which is dug up, must be removed, and disposed of appropriately, not reburied on completion of the dig.	

#### UTILITY PROPOSALS – DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS

2024/13590	DE-MINIMIS-CONSENTS - UTILITY PROPOSALS AGREED BY THE DE-MINIMIS COMMIITTEE	DISCHARGE
	DM0201 SSE - 11kV/LVPole Replacement / Refurbishment Works replace 39 poles - 5 x Low Voltage Schemes. 9 x 11kV Schemes.	
	DM0202 Keir for SW Water Water main connection, Hyde Plants, Ogdens, Hyde	

**CAMPSITES (CAMPING IN THE NEW FOREST – CNF)**

2024/13591 CNF ADVISORY COMMITTEE DISCHARGE

Mr Chatters advised the Court that he will be unable to attend the next meeting which is on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> August.

**SSSI RESTORATION WORKS**

2024/13592 HOLLY REGENERATION PENS DISCHARGE

The pens are approved but plans are requested please. Action DS

**ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION BY FORESTRY ENGLAND**

2024/13593 ACTION LIST RESUME

The list was noted.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND**

2024/13594 DRONES/FILMING PERMISSIONS DISCHARGE

Following a recent complaint about a drone being flown on Wilverley Plain, the DS will share FE's policy covering drones in the Forest. The DS confirmed that the flying of drones is only allowed in specific circumstances. The Court feels that where permission has been given, appropriate signage should be erected at the location as members of the public may think drones are allowed, if they see one being flown. Action DS

2024/13595 ICE CREAM VAN AT STONEY CROSS DISCHARGE

The ice cream van has once again been seen parked on grass near the road rather than on the approved site further into the car park. The DS will see that the vendor is asked to move to the correct site. Action DS

2024/13596 CYCLING PROPOSALS & MAP DISCHARGE

The updated map will be shared as soon as possible. At this stage it is confidential and must not be made publicly available. The OV and DS will discuss how FE's application for the Court's consent to the proposals will be managed. Action OV/DS

2024/13597 BURNING PROGRAMME DISCHARGE

The DS was asked if the annual burning programme can start earlier, in November/December, because this year, due to the weather and staffing issues, not much has been completed. The DS said this will be considered. Burning is essential to the effective management of the New Forest SSSI. Action DS

2024/13598 RAGWORT DISCHARGE

Mr Readhead thanked FE for pulling the ragwort at Blackfield. He said a huge amount has been removed.

2024/13599 MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC INTERACTING WITH STOCK

DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin said that during a recent visit to Boltons Bench with the British Horse Society, members of the public were seen interacting with stock. People were trying to pat and feed ponies and someone was cuddling a cow! A BBQ was also seen.

The DS was asked if more Rangers could be on duty at weekends. As usual lack of resources was cited as the reason why this is not possible. Ms Sevier said Stoney Cross is another bad area with people regularly seen cuddling donkeys.

The OV commented that both FE and the NFNPA are always short of resources and yet they come forward with more things that increase pressure on the Forest, the food concessions being an example. He said the Court struggles to give support for such ventures when it knows little will be done to mitigate the issues that are likely to result from their introduction. Two reports on visitor numbers show visitor impact is increasing but how that impact can be reduced is not evident. Ice Cream Sales have been allowed for a great many years, but if they are now causing harm, consideration should probably be given to whether they should continue.

The Deputy Surveyor referred to the Recreation Management Strategy (RMS) which is trying to reduce pressure. In reply, Mr Deakin said that as far back as when Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre was OV, there were plenty of aspirations but there appears to have been little progress. He added if there has been, can the Verderers please be told. In response, the DS accused the Court of not attending meetings. The OV stated that as the Court's representative on the RMS Steering Group he is not aware that he has missed any meetings and noted that the meeting planned for July is now being scheduled for September. Mr Manley, who is the Court's representative on the RMS Advisory Group complained that meetings are held on Teams during office hours when he is unable to attend. Miss Sevier is on the Access Forum and the OV sits on the RMS Steering Group and neither feel that sufficient progress is being made.

2024/13600 CYCLING PROPOSALS &amp; MAP

DISCHARGE

The discussion returned to the proposed new cycle routes. Mr Deakin said the underpasses are not safe because of stock movements and stock shading. Picket Post underpass is already on a cycle route and is a concern. Discussion continued on how hazards to safety could be mitigated and the question was asked, is appropriate signage helpful? The DS pointed out that both the public and livestock have been using the underpasses ever since they were constructed. He said he is keen that FE works together with the Court and CDA to find a safe solution that enables that to continue. The DS also highlighted the revised New Forest Cycling code, which now has specific references to underpasses. Mr Gammon commented that signage helps because if someone enters an underpass when they have been clearly warned there is a hazard, and the person is injured, in law, there is an element of contributory negligence if an attempt is made to claim damages.

The OV said there may have to be an element of compromise, however if FE proposals increase the legal risk to the owner of any animal that causes an injury, then its only reasonable that FE, as the landowner, shares that additional risk.

2024/13601 TRENCH AT IRONS HILL LODGE DISCHARGE

Plastic barriers designed to protect a trench that was dug at Irons Hill Lodge by HCC to alleviate flooding on the nearby highway have fallen over. The trench needs filling in and FE was asked to arrange for it to be done as soon as possible.

Action DS

2024/13602 THEFT OF TIMBER DISCHARGE

The DS reported that there have been several incidents of theft of timber at Balmer Lawn. The wood is hardwood, fire wood. FE has increased security and the Police have been informed. Everyone was asked to be vigilant.

**There being no other business involving Forestry England, the Deputy Surveyor and Land Agent left the meeting**

#### **MATTERS ARISING FROM EARLIER IN THE MEETING**

2024/13603 CAMPING IN THE FOREST (CNF) - FOOTPRINT ECOLOGY REPORT ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE NEW FOREST CAMPSITES RESUME

Mr Chatters will draft a response to this report. To assist him, members of the Court are asked to let him have their views.

Action All

#### **ENCROACHMENTS**

2024/13604 ENCROACHMENTS NOT INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND DISCHARGE

The CDA is dealing with two encroachments, one at Linwood and another at Minstead Manor.

#### **OTHER AGENDA ITEMS**

2024/13605 REQUEST TO DEPASTURE PIGS UNDER LICENCE DURING THE 2024 PANNAGE SEASON DISCHARGE

A request to depasture three sows from a practising commoner whose property benefits from the right of common of pasture over the Forest, but not the right of mast, was approved. The permission is for this year only. The Clerk will advise the commoner.

Action Clerk

2024/13606 BACK UP GRAZING STUDY DISCHARGE

The Court considered the request from Dr Jo Ivey for access to the marking fee register (for commoners' contact details only) in order to undertake a backup grazing study on behalf of the Friends of the New Forest (NFA). This was agreed subject to the responses to the questionnaires being anonymous and all work being GDPR compliant. The Clerk will liaise with Dr Ivey.

Action Clerk

2024/13607 VERDERERS' WEBSITE DISCHARGE  
 The website needs updating and improving and expenditure of up to £7,500 was approved for this purpose. Mr Manley declared an interest and did not take part in this decision. Action OV/Clerk

2024/13608 IT UPGRADE DISCHARGE  
 The OV explained the time has come to upgrade the Court's IT systems. The Court agreed. We are remaining with our current IT support company. Action OV

**REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS**

2024/13609 DOG OWNERS WORKING GROUP DISCHARGE  
 Mr Manley said the group is meeting in September.

**OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

2024/13610 FINANCIAL MATTERS INCLUDING THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME  
 The Financial Statement was noted.

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

2024/13611 TICKS DISCHARGE  
 The Agisters have been advised to be extra vigilant checking themselves for ticks as there seem to be many more this year.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

2024/13612 VERDERERS' ELECTION RESUME  
 The Clerk explained that NFDC is helping run the election this year. Every effort will be made to encourage those eligible to complete a registration form to vote, including at the New Forest Show, and on Social Media. Parish Councils will be asked to help encourage residents to ensure their names appear on the Register. Elected Verderers will enlist the help of the CDA. Local media will also be contacted. Action Clerk

2024/13613 DRIFTS DISCHARGE  
 Mr Deakin said that any help members of the Court are able to provide at the drifts will be gratefully received.

2024/13614 MARKING FEES DISCHARGE  
 The marking fees have almost reached the limit allowed under the byelaws. That limit needs increasing. Means will be explored by which the maximum can be increased from time to time, without a revision of the byelaws, in much the same way that penalties for breaches of the byelaws are linked to Level 1 on the Standard Scale. Action OV/Clerk

**STAFF MATTERS**

2024/13615 STAFF COMMITTEE MINUTES DISCHARGE

The Staff Committee Minutes were noted.

2024/13616 PROPOSAL TO RENAME THE STAFF COMMITTEE DISCHARGE

The Staff Committee is to be renamed the Staff Liaison Committee as it is felt this more accurately describes the remit of the committee.

2024/13617 PROPOSED HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) COMMITTEE INCORPORATING THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE RESUME

A new HR Committee was set up. Members will be the OV, Mr Deakin, Mr Gammon and Mr Ferris.

The OV will draft some terms of reference which will be circulated and agreed by email. If agreement cannot be reached by email, the OV will call an August Court Committee. Acton OV/All

The new committee will have delegated authority to deal with all employment issues including financial matters unless they extend beyond agreed budgets.

Membership of the committee will be reviewed from time to time and in any event, following the November 2024 Verderers' Election.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 13:25 hrs



18<sup>th</sup> September 2024