

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers – Wednesday 21st July 2021

At the time of this Court, the UK Government has lifted many restrictions in respect of the outbreak of novel Coronavirus, known as Covid-19 which started at the beginning of 2020. The Verderers adopted a cautious approach this month and met in Open Court, for the first time since March 2020, in the Linden Hall at the Lyndhurst Community Centre. This hall being larger and airier than the Verderers' Hall and therefore safer from the point of view of the risk of transmitting the virus amongst those attending.

The Committee stage of the meeting was once again held online via 'Zoom'.

The following is a record of proceedings.

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

The Head Agister opened the Court with his usual proclamation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS

2021/11770 APPOINTED FORESTRY ENGLAND VERDERER - BARRY DOWSETT

Forestry England has announced that Barry Dowsett will serve one more year as its appointed Verderer. Barry will therefore serve until July 2022 when he will have completed 10 years on the Court. I understand that Forestry England will begin the process of appointing his successor in Spring 2022.

2021/11771 APPOINTED NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY VERDERER - JOHN SANGER

I am pleased to welcome John Sanger to the Court. At its meeting on 1st July, the New Forest National Park Authority appointed John as its Verderer. He will serve an initial term of one year. John is a Parish Councillor in Woodgreen, where he has lived since 1982. John is an employment Tribunal Member in Southampton, a member of the Sustainable Development Fund grants panel and the Authority's Equality and Diversity Champion.

2021/11772 THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR

As I am sure you will all know, Bruce Rothnie, Deputy Surveyor since 2014, retires in August. It is the lot of the Deputy Surveyor to have regular dealings with the Verderers and the Official Verderer in particular. Many of you will read the minutes of the Verderers' committee meetings and will know that there are times when the Verderers and Forestry England do not agree. What is perhaps less apparent from those minutes is that there are many areas where we and Forestry England see eye to eye and work constructively

together for the benefit of the Forest. My dealings with the Deputy Surveyor, both as Official Verderer and as chairman of the board of the Verderers Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, have been characterised by that constructive approach, his courtesy, consideration for others, particularly his staff and an excellent grasp of the many facets of Forest life. I am sure we all wish him a long and happy retirement.

I look forward to welcoming his successor Craig Harrison at our September Court.

2021/11773 THE WORKINGS OF THE COURT OVER THE LAST 15 MONTHS

I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words about the workings of the Court over the last 15 months. Our office staff have worked from home with occasional visits to the office when necessary. We have all adapted to the virtual world and our committee meetings have been held with only the odd technical glitch. My fellow Verderers may contradict me, but I believe everybody has been able to have their say, sometimes at some length, as if we had been round-the-table in Queens House.

I'm glad to report that we have received a regular flow of presentments and, whatever the future may hold, I hope that that will continue. We live in uncertain times and I cannot predict whether it will be possible to hold Open Courts in the coming months. Suffice it to say if we can hold them sensibly and safely, we will do so.

The vital work of our Agisters has continued. Last winter we ruled out marking cattle on health and safety grounds. Marking fees of course remained payable! A reduced number of drifts were held in the autumn. This autumn the Agisters will be marking cattle as normal and a full programme of drifts is planned.

It is a pleasure to have two of our Agisters present today. It is rumoured they are the only two who can still fit into their uniform! I will leave it to you to judge the veracity of that rumour.

It remains only for me to thank all of our staff for their commitment and hard work during challenging times and to thank all of those who support the work of the Verderers.

2021/11774 VERDERERS' ELECTION NOVEMBER 2021

There will be an election of three Verderers on Friday 26th November 2021 when the terms of office of Richard Deakin, Jim Greenwood and Anthony Pasmore come to an end. We of course hope that all three will seek a further term of six years, but other candidates may seek election.

If you wish to vote, you must return your application form (available from the Clerk to the Verderers, Verderers' Office, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst SO43 7NH suewestwood@verderers.org.uk by Friday 17th September. Copies of the application form are available in Court today so please take copies for yourself and anyone you think may be eligible to vote.

I would urge all those eligible to vote to ensure that they complete an application form so that they can be included on the electoral role. It is often said that the Verderers' Court is the cradle of democracy in the Forest and a healthy electoral roll underscores that democratic legitimacy.

Nominations for candidates are required by noon on the 12th November. Nomination papers can be obtained from the Under Sheriff, Rachel Brooks, at solicitors Foote Anstey, The White Building, 1-4 Cumberland Place, Southampton SO15 2NP. If there are only three candidates, an election will not be necessary. If there are more than three candidates, the election will be held on Friday 26th November, at four polling stations: Lyndhurst, Lymington, Ringwood & Fordingbridge.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2021/11775 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR JUNE 2021

The Agisters attended 6 accidents in June, compared with 4 in the same period last year.

2 Ponies and a Donkey were killed.

A Donkey was injured and had to be destroyed by the Agister.

2 Ponies were injured.

2 accidents occurred during daylight, 2 at twilight and 2 in the dark.

2 drivers failed to report having been involved in an accident.

The total number of commoners' animals killed and injured in 2021 to date is 17, compared with 24 in the same period last year.

PRESENTMENT BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR

2021/11776 PANNAGE

In accordance with the provisions of Section 7 of the New Forest Act 1964, the Verderers have been consulted with regard to the dates of the pannage season and I hereby formally notify the Court that the season will commence on **Monday 13 September 2021** and that it will end on **Sunday 14 November 2021**, 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.

2021/11777 THANK YOU FROM BRUCE ROTHNIE, DEPUTY SURVEYOR

I would like to thank the Official Verderer for his kind words and his best wishes for my imminent retirement.

I have regarded my role as Deputy Surveyor as an immense privilege and I have always remained respectful of the responsibility and heritage that the position carries.

You quickly discover that the opinions of people who live and work in the Forest are immensely diverse and always passionate. But there is common ground, which is simply a care for the Forest and to see its beauty, nature, communities, and traditions thrive.

In an increasingly complex and fast-moving world, care for the Forest requires, more than ever, collective effort and collaboration. It is also true that many people in the Forest do not fully appreciate how much is achieved by those working at the sharp end of daily management of this landscape. I want to take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues whose commitment to the Forest remains undiminished. They have been outstanding, and every one of them commits themselves because they care, not because it is their job.

I hope the Forest communities recognise that to achieve the best future for the Forest requires people on the ground to manage the vegetation, wildlife, livestock, and visitors. They need our collective support and respect for everything they achieve and want to achieve. I wish all those men and women well for the future.

I have had the great privilege of engaging closely with the Verderers over the last 7 years. I have come to appreciate the level of voluntary commitment they all make to sustain this Forest and its commoning heritage. I have learnt a huge amount from their expertise and experience and learn more every day. Their efforts are rarely fully appreciated. The Verderers, their role and this Court is a critical component of a future Forest. I hope they remain energetic to their cause and, as I hand over to Craig Harrison, I am sure he will look forward to more collaborative working for the benefit of the Forest.

May I also express my particular thanks to the Official Verderer, whose diplomacy and astute handling of the Court's affairs and in our partnership working have been exemplary. I hope he finds the energy to keep going. His advice to me when I shared my intention to retire, with a typical glint in his eye and wry smile, was "be careful about what you volunteer to do".

It will be for others to judge my contribution to the care of the Forest, but I leave with the personal satisfaction that we have achieved a great deal, but I am also fully aware that there is much, much more to do. So, I wish everyone involved in the Forest the very best for the future in your endeavours to share the care for the Forest.

Thank you.

PRESENTMENTS

2021/11778 FOREST CAMPSITES

Presentment by Mr Brian Tarnoff, Chair, Habitats & Landscape Committee on behalf of the Friends of the New Forest/New Forest Association

The Friends of the New Forest support a comprehensive review of the campsites on the Crown Lands, their infrastructure and impact on habitat and livestock, and action taken to implement protection of the designated habitats, including the 2001 prescription of Natural England to close three campsites.

Citing fundamental incompatibility within close proximity of veteran trees, Natural England's SAC Management Plan for the New Forest 2001 gave "Unfavourable Declining" condition assessments to Hollands Wood, Denny Wood and Longbeech due to the presence and management of the campsites, calling for their removal or relocation as an immediate high priority.

We are at present expanding our recent consideration of evidence on recreation impact, to focus on campsite impacts and develop a spatial model of proximity of the sites to key species and SPA features. For now it is worth noting:

- Around 20% of the campsites in the National Park are on land covered by the primary conservation designations (i.e. SAC, SPA, SSSI, Ramsar).
- Some campsites are in such close proximity to protected nesting bird habitats, that if they were merely car parks, they would be closed from March to August under current Forestry England policy.
- Our 2010 Campsite Survey showed the campsites in pasture woodlands, (those identified for closure in the 2001 SAC Plan), have less than half the canopy they ought.
- Unwelcome, invasive plant species have been recorded at campsites throughout the UK and the New Forest in particular.

We are gathering further evidence and will report by this Autumn.

We ask that the Verderers use their position as a key partner in the National Park's new Partnership Plan, whose draft lacks any meaningful initiatives to address the impacts of campsites, and abandons previous aspirations.

The Partnership Plan provides an opportunity, not just to assess the campsites on the Forest, but also for the National Park Authority with New Forest District Council to more comprehensively track, manage and establish standards for temporary campsite provision as granted under Permitted Development Rights. The growth of the pop-up / temporary campsites, and other facilities off the Crown Lands may have already provided or exceeded provision necessary to replace the capacity which would be lost from possible closures. With consistent standards for mitigation and sustainability, off Forest campsites would directly benefit the rural economy and commoning, as well as disperse tourist spending throughout the district.

For many years it has been known that some campsites are incompatible with the habitats they occupy. In addition, the CDA and Verderers now believe that camping on the Crown Lands is incompatible with livestock. It is possible to meet the desire of visitors to camp and enjoy the Forest without causing harm to its valuable habitats and commoning way of life. We ask everyone who cares for the Forest to join us in demanding action from Forestry England, and both the New Forest National Park and District Council to bring this about.

2021/11779 DEPUTY SURVEYOR

Presentment by Mr Brian Tarnoff, Chair, Habitats & Landscape Committee on behalf of the Friends of the New Forest/New Forest Association

Given that this is Bruce Rothnie's last court attendance as the Deputy Surveyor, Friends of the New Forest would like to join the Verderers in thanking him for his service to the New Forest.

We particularly thank Bruce for the following:

- Bearing the brunt of the issues that the FC faced over the immensely successful wetlands restoration programme, including the attempt to re-meander a particular Victorian drainage ditch.
- Overseeing better policies regarding the protection of fungi and nesting bird habitats.
- The most inclusive consultation over the latest Forest Design Plan, that we've yet seen, and a vast improvement over the "closed shop" approach of previous plans.

Bruce has fielded our criticisms and complaints amiably, and engaged positively with us. We can only hope that the next DS will welcome our future input as graciously. We will continue to support FE initiatives. where they seek to promote the long-term protection of the New Forest.

2021/11780 RESTORATION OF PENNY MOOR

Presentment from Mr Brian Ingram, Commoner

Mr Ingram said he would like to draw the Verderers' attention to the river restoration works at Penny Moor. He said the approach to the bridge that leads to Pig bush & Partridge Bush is impassable, there is an area 20-50 yards wide where water is being pushed over the grass. He stuck a stick in the wet area which went in more than 2'6". Mr Ingram said the area is a danger to livestock, walkers & horse riders and the CDA has been requesting a site meeting with FE for months. With the area as wet as it is now, Mr Ingram is worried how it will be in Winter.

2021/11781 DEPUTY SURVEYOR

Presentment by Mr Brian Ingram, Commoner

Mr Ingram thanked the Deputy Surveyor for all his hard work and wished him a happy retirement.

2021/11782 BBQ'S ON FOREST CAMPSITES

Presentment by Mr Andrew Parry-Norton

'On traveling past Hollands Wood Campsite on the 19th of June at about 6pm, I noticed three large fires from the road.

Upon enquiring at the campsite reception, I was informed by a warden and the site manager that this was allowed; the campers could have BBQ's.

Forestry England has declared the Forest a no BBQ or open fire zone but continues to allow the use of them with in the campsites.

Would the Verderers agree that?

1. This is a fire risk and contravenes the FE's policy on BBQ's and Fire pits in the New Forest.

2. It sets a bad example to day visitors and causes confusion of the rules.

The Verderers should apply their persuasive powers with FE to ban all open flame BBQ's and fire pits from the Forest Campsites.'

2021/11783 BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS (TB) AND THE TB CONTROL PLAN
Presentment by Mr Mark Ferrett, Practising Commoner

'Thank you for the updated TB control plan and my apologies for not being able to attend the open court but would you please take the points I am making on board for the benefit of the New Forest Commoners.

Could I suggest with reference to the TB control plan in the New Forest Herd Status that all holdings with bovine stock on them within the perambulation or better still a mile radius from the perambulation of the forest are placed with Defra's agreeance under the same restrictions as the commoners have to obey, I know this will not be popular with some of our non turning out farmers/small holders but for obvious reasons this will protect themselves as well as the commoners with future movements in and out of the New Forest perambulation, bearing in mind that allot of these non turning out residents within the perambulation have taken full advantage of the subsidy payments of the open New forest grazing schemes. It is obvious that some non turning out bovine keepers, stock do make contact with the commoners animals/wildlife, this in its own right could be a disaster for our TB status. If we are to maintain a basically TB free herd extra measures like this could be to all of our benefit, this will include every movement including bull hire to be placed in the same restrictions as the commoners should be obeying. We all have to realise that TB in livestock and wildlife has no boundaries so this extra measure would be a great benefit to the unique situation of the open forest grazing.'

IN COMMITTEE VIA ZOOM

2021/11784 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last Court held on Wednesday, 16th June 2021 were approved and will be signed by the Official Verderer at the earliest opportunity.

2021/11785 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest can be found on the Verderers' website www.verderers.org.uk.

Mr Sanger will complete the usual Declarations of Interest form for publication on the Verderers' website.

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2021/11786 RESTORATION OF PENNY MOOR

RESUME

The proposals have caused significant concerns. It is thought the CDA may produce a counter proposal. Mr Deakin has been involved, as well as Mrs Westerhoff, who said she will produce a note of the site meeting. The works have yet to be agreed.

Action
DW

2021/11787 BBQ'S ON FOREST CAMPSITES

DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor said that disposable BBQ's are not allowed. BBQ's on a stand are allowed because the campsites are a controlled environment with fire hydrants easily to hand. Campfires are not acceptable. Information is given to campers on their arrival. The DS said he needs to investigate what happened and he will contact the campsite warden to ensure the rules are adhered to.

2021/11788 BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS (TB) AND THE NEW FOREST TB CONTROL PLAN DISCHARGE

The position can be checked again, but including non commoning animals in the Plan was ruled out by the APHA (Animal & Plant Health Agency) right at the beginning. The plan permits specified categories of cattle to move on and off the Forest without having to be TB tested every time and it is a plan specifically for commoners' cattle.

Action RD

It is felt non-commoners may well be concerned about Mr Ferrett's suggestion that all cattle in and around the Forest should be included in the Forest TB Control Plan, and so it was agreed it would be helpful if the draft minute could be made available to the public as soon as possible.

Action
OV/Clerk

2021/11789 FOREST CAMPSITES DISCHARGE

The Court considers the NFA's presentment to be well thought out. As it is a long presentment, the first page only has been recorded in these minutes. The presentment will be published in full on the Verderers' website.

Action
Clerk's Asst

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS COURTS OF CONCERN TO FORESTRY ENGLAND

2021/11790 CAMPSITES RESUME

A further long discussion took place concerning the Open Forest campsites.

The Court remains convinced that the campsites are in the wrong place and believes that all the Forest bodies should be looking at how they can be moved to more suitable and sustainable locations. In its presentment, the NFA suggests that the future of the campsites should be included in the Partnership Plan. Mr Sanger said he will take that up with the NFNPA. There was, however, some concern that the plan is more long term and action is needed sooner. More information is requested as to Camping in the Forest's legal entity and Forestry England's role in it. Mr Greenwood said he will undertake some research.

Action
JS

Action JG

The Official Verderer will draft a response to Mr Ingram's presentment.

Action OV

2021/11791 VERDERERS' POLICIES REVIEW RESUME

Mrs Westerhoff will circulate her re-draft. The OV urged everyone to look at it and comment. The OV, Mrs Westerhoff and the Clerk will prepare a final draft before the September Court.

Action
OV/DW/Clerk

2021/11792 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO) RESUME

Work continues to promote a PSPO which could be used to protect the Forest from various illegal activities and anti-social behaviours which are causing problems in the Forest. The OV has written to the Chair of the NFNPA and to Cllr Edward Heron, Leader of NFDC. Various other areas now have PSPO's in place including parts of Dorset and, following the Saddleworth Moor fires, the High Peaks District. The OV felt the introduction of a PSPO which protected the Forest would receive broad support from the public.

	<p>The DS pointed out that resources will be needed to manage a PSPO, both in respect of enforcement and administration and the cost will need to be covered. He suggested the support of the Police and Crime Commissioner will be essential. The OV said he is due to meet with her and Councillor Heron.</p>	Action OV
2021/11793	<p>ILLEGAL CYCLING</p> <p>The Court feels very strongly that this is an issue that must be tackled by FE as the problem is widespread and growing.</p> <p>The two types of electric bikes which are now available were also discussed – power assisted bikes and powered bikes. The latter are capable of much greater speeds and require a licence. Everyone agreed the use of the latter on the Forest is inappropriate. Investigations indicate the use of electric bicycles on the waymarked cycle network was never considered. Electric motorbikes are available and the use of those on the Forest would be a cause of great concern.</p> <p>The DS said he feels a PSPO is a more appropriate method of dealing with illegal cycling.</p> <p>The DS did agree to take forward the extreme example of illegal activities on the Forest, as highlighted by Mr Pasmore, and he asked that the details be provided. Mr Pasmore said he will make it available via the Clerk. The DS said he will then seek advice of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).</p> <p>The OV will continue discussions with FE about enforcement of its byelaws</p>	RESUME Action AHP/DS/ Clerk Action OV
2021/11794	<p>PCC INVITATION TO MEET RE THE B3078 ROGER PENNY WAY</p> <p>The Official Verderer has a half hour meeting with the PCC and Cllr Heron on 23rd July 2021.</p>	RESUME Action OV
2021/11795	<p>ILLEGAL PARKING ON BRAMSHAW TELEGRAPH JUNCTION</p> <p>The Clerk reported she has been in touch with HCC regarding this problem. As the turning area consists only of grass cell blocks it is not possible to add road markings. HCC suggested an FE No Parking sign might help. Mr Pasmore said that recently the problem has not been so bad and so it was agreed to discharge this item.</p>	DISCHARGE
2021/11796	<p>MINSTEAD CRICKET CLUB LICENCE</p> <p>Mr Grugeon reported no further progress on this matter which will be resumed in September.</p>	RESUME Action PG
DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS TO BE RECORDED AT THIS COURT		
2021/11797	<p>DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS</p> <p>DM0123 – SSE Low voltage supply to Hawthorns, Forest Rd, Nomansland DM0124 – SSE Low voltage supply to Lyndhurst CC Pavilion</p>	RESUME

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS INCLUDING THE ENHANCEMENT LIST

2021/11798 ENHANCEMENT LIST RESUME

Noted.

ISSUES REPORTED TO FORESTRY ENGLAND (ACTION LIST)

2021/11799 ACTION LIST RESUME

Noted.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

2021/11800 WOODCRATES FELLING PROPOSALS DISCHARGE

The Court thanked FE for a prompt report following the site visit. The proposals were accepted.

2021/11801 NETWORK RAIL SUBSTATION EXTENSION AT WOODFIDLEY DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett and Mr Greenwood reported on the recent preliminary site meeting. Suitable land for exchange has yet to be identified.

Detailed proposals for the substation will be provided in due course.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

2021/11802 BRIDGES DISCHARGE

Mr Greenwood expressed concern at the poor and dangerous condition of some Forest footbridges. He said he has reported several but nothing has been done. A bridge at Busketts and another at Furzey Lawn Inclosure are two examples. The latter is thought to have been put in many years ago by the Hunt but it is on FE land. The DS said he will follow up on both.

Action DS

2021/11803 PANNAGE SEASON DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin thanked the DS for his prompt attention to agreeing and announcing the dates for this year's pannage season.

2021/11804 UNDERPASS GATES RESUME

The underpass gates under the A31 at Furzey Gardens need replacing. These form part of the animal diseases contingency plan and are the responsibility of FE. It was also suggested that the plan should be revisited/reviewed. The DS said he will set this up.

Action DS

2021/11805 USE OF CUT VEGETATION TO BLOCK PATHS DISCHARGE

Dr Ferris commented that cut heather has been used to block some tracks on the Brockenhurst side of Markway. He asked the DS if the Court would normally be consulted in advance of such works being undertaken. Mr Deakin added that the heather would interfere with pony driving and so it should be included in Open Forest Management matters that are discussed in advance. Such works have been undertaken before, but after consultation. The DS said he noted the comments.

Action DS

The Deputy Surveyor and Mr Grugeon left the meeting

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS COURTS

2021/11806	VERDERERS' LIVESTOCK OFFICER	RESUME
	Two applications have been received. Interviews will be arranged. The advert will be removed from the website as soon as possible.	GF/Clerk
2021/11807	FUTURE FUNDING FOR THE FOREST	DISCHARGE
	This is work in progress. There is a new initiative called Farming in Protected Landscapes that may offer some funding for the Forest. A panel is to be set up which will decide how to give out the money and to whom. Details will be circulated and the OV asked members of the Court for ideas.	Action All
2021/11808	VERDERERS' ELECTION	DISCHARGE
	The process is ongoing. Advice has been received that the electoral register can be made available to candidates for use for electoral purposes only. A declaration will have to be signed by anyone wishing to receive a paper copy. Mr Pasmore said he would like a copy and this will be arranged. He expressed concern that a lot of Forest residents who could be on the Register aren't and he is keen to try to encourage more people to sign up and vote.	Action OV/Clerk
2021/11809	UNPAID MARKING FEES	DISCHARGE
	The Clerk reported that the three commoners who were very late paying their marking fees have now paid.	
2021/11810	AGISTERS' VEHICLES	RESUME
	After very careful consideration of the available options, the Court agreed that three Toyota Hilux vehicles will be purchased. Two of the current Land Rovers are still running satisfactorily and so they can be replaced when required, perhaps in a year's time, assuming an extension to the current lease hire contract can be obtained. The new vehicles will be ordered as soon as possible.	Action OV/JB (Asst Clerk)
2021/11811	VAT REGISTRATION	DISCHARGE
	The Court's accountants have advised that there is insufficient input (transactions on which VAT can be charged) to make it worthwhile registering for VAT.	

ENCROACHMENTS NOT INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

2021/11812	CDA ENCROACHMENTS COMMITTEE	DISCHARGE
	The OV said that the working group is overwhelmed with encroachments. The two voluntary CDA members are currently working on fifteen. The CDA Chair, Charlotte Lines, has requested financial support from the Court in order to fund a part time (1 or 2 days a week) Encroachments Officer, to take on the tasks which are necessary to keep up with the problem of encroachments. This usually takes the form of visiting the property/land owners who have encroached on the grazing and/or writing letters. In response, the Court requested more information and a formal proposal.	Action OV

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

2021/11813 BT OPENREACH PROPOSALS FOR BROADBAND CONNECTION TO WOOD SORREL, HIGHWOOD – RATIFY APPROVAL FOR DUCT ROUTE DISCHARGE

The route for this duct was agreed via email.

2021/11814 PARTNERSHIP PLAN DISCHARGE

Mrs Westerhoff will draft some additional words to include reference to the need to move the Camping in the Forest (CiTF) campsites off the Open Forest. A further draft will be circulated and once agreed will be submitted. Action DW

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHP SCHEME

2021/11815 TURF HILL RESUME

Three areas have been identified where there are potentially important archaeological remains and these have been avoided, but the Court feels strongly that a way to reinstate the remainder of Turf Hill whilst respecting the potential for there to be archaeological remains must be found. Action OV

A lot more terrestrial restoration is in the pipeline.

VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME

2021/11816 VGS APPLICATIONS DISCHARGE

Applications for next year are coming in.

REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2021/11817 NEW FOREST (WATER CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP MEETING) DISCHARGE

Mrs Westerhoff reported on this recent meeting. The New Forest is the best site in the country for the water quality of its wetlands.

The Freshwater Habitats Trust (FHT) is leading on various issues. There is a project working on solving the problems with old and failing septic tanks and another group is working on pollution from the roads that is getting into watercourses. Mr Deakin suggested that where grips feed into wetland habitat, they should be re-sited or catchpits constructed.

STAFF MATTERS, GENERAL REPORTS AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

2021/11818 CONDITION OF STOCK REPORTS DISCHARGE

The Head Agister's condition of stock reports have recently become quite robust. The Court is keen to ensure that the Head Agister is aware that his reports often find their way into the media. The Clerk said she is sure he is aware, but she will check.

2021/11819 FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME

The financial statement was noted.

2021/11820 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Forest Ponies	4923	4961
Forest Cattle	3038	4798
Forest Donkeys	150	132
Forest Pigs	0	0
Forest Sheep	0	0
Total Forest Stock	8111	9891
Common Ponies	854	824
Common Cattle	1736	2166
Common Donkeys	136	138
Common Pigs	88	78
Common Sheep	195	223
Total Common Stock	3009	3429
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	8111	9891
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	2726	3128
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	10837	13019
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	11120	133320

The drop in stock numbers is noted.

TRAINING & HEALTH & SAFETY

2021/11821 INCIDENT BETWEEN A COW AND A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin reported that friends had told him about a report on social media where someone said they were chased by a cow with a calf. They took cover in the gorse. The Clerk said the office has not been informed. On social media, at least half the comments defended the animals.

The Clerk will add this to the list of incidents between stock and the public.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2021/11822 THE 1964 COMMONS AGREEMENT RESUME

The OV reported that the Chair and Vice Chair of the NFCDA have asked when the concessionary fees come to an end. It is 2025 but a date needs to be agreed and publicised. Commoners need some warning. It was agreed an announcement will be made in the September Court.

Action OV /
Clerk

2021/11823 THE FUTURE OF THE POUND BOTTOM RECYCLING SITE DISCHARGE

This 100 acre brown field site is situated on the northern edge of the Forest on the road to Hale. Its current use is due to come to an end. It is adjacent to the RSPB woodland. The Court has been invited to comment on the possible future use of this land and it was agreed that it should either be reinstated as grassland for back up grazing or it could be allowed to become woodland.

Action OV

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers – Wednesday 16th July 2021

2021/11824 VERDERERS ELECTORAL REGISTER AND COMMON RIGHTS SEARCHES DISCHARGE

In response to a query from Mr Deakin, the Clerk advised that she is offering to check the Forest Atlas for people wishing to confirm their eligibility to vote. This service is being offered free of charge for a verbal report. Written searches remain chargeable.

2021/11825 DRIFTS AND COVID-19 DISCHARGE

The first drift is on 15th August. It is likely that some safeguards, albeit possibly not the same to those operated last year, will be imposed this year.

2021/11826 BT OPENREACH BOXES DISCHARGE

Natural England is reportedly asking that all joint boxes are buried to a depth of 40cm with soil put on top. However, Openreach cannot put them that deep. Further work is needed to find a solution.

2021/11827 BURLEY GOLF CLUB DISCHARGE

Mrs Westerhoff, Mr Greenwood and Mr Readhead recently visited the Golf Club. Mrs Westerhoff produced a report which she circulated to all members of the Court prior to this meeting. The report included some recommendations in respect of works the Club is asking to carry out. The Court was broadly in support of the proposals which include:-

- Moving three tees. The new tees are to have the same sized footprint as the old ones.
- A taller sign at 2m in height and with 10cm lettering (as per The White Buck sign nearby)

Mr Pasmore said that the maximum amount of turf stripping from the surrounding area, for use in repairing greens must be stipulated.

The Court agreed to sign off the Site Management Plan (SMS) providing the conditions above are included and the size of greens is measured and monitored by FE. Mr Grugeon will be asked to ensure the SMS includes these conditions. Natural England's agreement is of course also required.

Action PG

2021/11828 BRAMSHAW TREES DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett reported that the tree guards at Burley measure 7' x 7' x 4'6" high. There are three rails on each side and there is stock fencing on the bottom two rails to stop pigs getting in. The Court re-confirmed it will be happy with the new Bramshaw trees being protected by guards to the same specification. The Clerk will advise Bramshaw PC.

Action Clerk

2021/11829 SEPTEMBER VERDERERS' COURT DISCHARGE

The OV said he will consider whether it is appropriate to hold the September Court in public nearer the time.

Action OV

There being no further business, the video conference ended at 16:05 hrs.

Julia Marshall
15 September 2021