Minutes of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 16th September 2026 at 9.30 a.m. in the Library, the King's House, Lyndhurst

PRESENT	Mr E Heron	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Mr A H Pasmore	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mr R Stride	Elected Verderer
	Mrs A Tilbury	Elected Verderer
	Miss K Harrison	Elected Verderer
	Mr M Gammon	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Mr C Chatters	Natural England Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE	Miss J Bayley	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J Gerrelli	Head Agister
APOLOGIES	Miss A Sevier MBE	National Park Appointed Verderer
	Mr R Manley	DEFRA Appointed Verderer

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2026/14896 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING — RESUME

The minutes of the last Court, held on Wednesday 15th July 2026 were approved, and signed by the Official Verderer.

2026/14897 NEW DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST — RESUME

There are no new declarations of interest.

2026/14898 CONDITION OF STOCK — RESUME

The Head Agister said the Forest never ceases to amaze him, with a small amount of rain things have gone from brown and burnt up to green and growing. He said most ponies are looking really well with shiny coats but the mares with foals are starting to lose some of their condition. The Agisters are catching and removing them from the Forest as and when they can.

The Head Agister said the cattle have managed remarkably well over the dry summer, but he is disappointed at the number of commoners who are calving on the Forest despite the advice issued by the Court. The Court shared his concerns, the Official Verderer will make an announcement at the next Court.

Pannage started on Monday, the Head Agister said he is surprised at the high number of pigs being marked despite the low number of acorns this year.

Mr Deakin, The Head Agister and Mr Manley attended a conference on equines on common land organised by World Horse Welfare. The Head Agister and Mr Deakin made a presentation at the event.

The Head Agister and Mr Manley recently hosted a visit to the Forest by the High Sheriff of Hampshire, The High Sheriff of Dorset and the Vice Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire. They visited the Court as well as the site of the wildfire and the Beaulieu Road Sales Yard.

2026/14899 EQUINE FLU RESUME

The Head Agister said there have been no new cases of flu seen in the Forest Herd for several weeks. He has had a discussion with the Verderers Veterinary Advisors, and the drifts will start in October.

The plan is to work through the remaining drift list, but some drifts may be altered slightly to include areas where there are a lot of mares with foals.

2026/14900 STALLIONS RESUME

The stallions have all now completed their quarantine period and are in the stallion grazing at Mottisfont.

The Agisters are arranging for the 2-year-old colts to be taken to the grazing at Cadland.

2026/14901 BOVINE TB RESUME

No new cases to report this month.

2026/14902 BLUE TONGUE RESUME

The outbreak of Blue Tongue continues to move closer to the Forest. Many commoners have vaccinated their cattle, but the current shortage of the vaccine is causing concern.

2026/14903 WILDFIRE DISCHARGE

Mr Chatters asked the Head Agister if he is satisfied that the Forest Stock were kept safe throughout the incident. The Head Agister replied that there were concerns but there were always a lot of people onsite. Mr Deakin said one night stock did stray onto the road close to the command centre but were quickly moved back to Forest.

The Head Agister spoke to the National Highways fencing contractors prior to them starting work. Mr Deakin said he and the Head Agister walked the fenceline before the road reopened and found a gap that had been missed by the underpass. Both raised their disappointment that the sections of fence that have deteriorated and are leaning over were not repaired at the same time as the burnt sections of fencing.

2026/14904 MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR RESUME

	2026	2025
Forest Ponies	5182	4839
Forest Cattle	2475	2454
Forest Donkeys	160	115
Forest Pigs	0	0
Forest Sheep	0	0
Total Forest Stock	7817	7408
Common Ponies	285	572
Common Cattle	25	247
Common Donkeys	70	97

Common Pigs	18	16
Common Sheep	22	14
Total Common Stock	420	946
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	7817	7408
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	380	916
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	8197	8324
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	8237	8354

The Head Agister left the meeting

2026/14905 BREACHES OF THE BYELAWS RESUME

Mr Deakin said a gelding in Bramshaw which had been serving mares has been permanently removed from the Forest.

Mr Deakin said a commoner has been banned from keeping animals. The Agisters are checking that she does not have any ponies left on the Forest.

OPEN COURT

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Craig Harrison, Deputy Surveyor
Mr Ollie Adderley, Land Agent, South West England

The Head Agister opened the Court with the usual proclamation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS

2026/14906 A31 FIRE

The Court wishes to place on record its thanks to everyone involved in responding to the wildfire that followed the vehicle fire on the A31 in August.
The fire affected more than 100 hectares of the New Forest and caused extensive damage to heathland, valley mire and bog habitats, and ancient woodland. The Court particularly wishes to thank the emergency services, Forestry England staff, the Agisters and Mr Deakin for their work during the incident and its immediate aftermath.

The Court is now working with Forestry England and other partner organisations through the Wildfire Recovery Environment Working Group to monitor the recovery of the affected area and assess the longer-term impacts of the fire.

The Court will continue to support work to identify any measures needed to assist recovery and to reduce the risk and impact of future wildfires on the Forest.

2026/14907 PANNAGE AND FEEDING OF FOREST LIVESTOCK

Pannage commenced on Monday. This is the period when commoners release their pigs onto the Forest to eat acorns, which are poisonous to cattle and ponies.
It is important that pigs do not have access to human food or food waste, because of the serious risk of African Swine Fever and Foot and Mouth Disease.

Residents in areas where livestock roam should keep their food waste caddies inside their gates for collection. In particular, residents whose properties are accessed directly from the grazed Forest must not place food waste bins where they can be reached by depastured stock.

2026/14908 EQUINE FLU AND DRIFTS UPDATE

The evidence indicates that equine flu has now passed through the Forest herd. The Agisters have seen no ponies showing symptoms on the Forest for several weeks. However, cases continue to be reported on some private holdings in the Forest area. The Court has therefore decided that the 2026 pony drifts will recommence from 1st October, in accordance with the existing drift list.

The situation will be closely monitored as the drifts progress. The way in which the drifts are undertaken will remain under review and may be adjusted if circumstances require.

As throughout the outbreak, the Court will continue to be guided by veterinary advice.

2026/14909 PRESSURES ON THE NEW FOREST

The Court thanks Mrs Nield for her presentment regarding the development pressures affecting the New Forest.

The Court agrees that increasing levels of development around the Forest have the potential to affect commoning in two principal ways. The first is through the loss of land that provides valuable back-up grazing. The second is through the additional recreational pressures generated by housing growth across a wide area.

The Court has actively engaged with these issues through the NFNPA Leaders Panel. It has also responded to consultations on the local plans prepared by New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority.
The Court will be responding to the current Regulation 19 consultation on the proposed New Forest National Park Local Plan before it closes later this month.

The Court has also been closely monitoring changes to national planning policy, most recently the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework.

The Court will continue to work with partner organisations and other statutory bodies. It will seek to ensure that the unique nature of the New Forest, and the vital role commoning plays in maintaining its internationally important landscape, habitats and cultural heritage, are properly recognised in planning policy and decision-making.

2026/14910 VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME APPLICATION FORMS

Due to staff absence the 2026 VGS Application forms have not yet been sent out to commoners. They will be sent out in due course.

THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2026/14911 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR JULY & AUGUST 2026

The Agisters attended 10 accidents in July and August this year, compared with 11 in the same period last year.

4 ponies were injured and had to be humanely destroyed by the Agister. 3 ponies and a donkey were uninjured, and in 2 instances the animals reportedly involved in an accident could not be found.

3 of the accidents happened in daylight, 1 at twilight and 6 in the dark.

2 drivers have failed to report having been involved in a collision with a Forest animal.

The total number of commoners' animals killed and injured this year is 16 compared with 28 in the same period last year.

PRESENTMENTS BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR

2026/14912 A31 FIRE

"I would like to extend huge thanks to fire & rescue services response to the wildfire on the A31 and the Forest. To all the crews from the Forest, neighbouring areas and across the country for their response to the fire, spending two weeks of dedicated time on site to minimise the impact and ensure it was fully dealt with.

Thank you to other emergency services and category1 responders for their role coordinating and supporting the response; also for the support provided on matters such as welfare of responders.

Thank you to New Forest organisations and commoners who helped with the response too. To Verderer Robert Stride for his quick thinking to help stranded cars on the A31.

Last but not least, thank you to my Forestry England team who responded so quickly and effectively to help manage the incident.

Everyone made huge commitments and worked tirelessly to minimise the impact of the fire on the Forest. It was a fantastic, coordinated and professional effort. Whilst the damage that occurred is tragic, it could have been so much worse. It is at times like this that the New Forest organisations and the community pull together and it highlights our shared love for the Forest."

2026/14913 MOBILE REFRESHMENT SALES

"This presentment relates to the food and beverage concessions at Wilverley and Boltons Bench.

For context there have been ice cream vans across the Forest for decades; in recent years we have been evolving the offer to reflect modern society (such as the coffee culture we now have).

A key change has been measures that reduce the impact on the Forest such as units that are more in keeping with the Forest landscape, and in robust locations with appropriate fencing that minimise livestock interaction risk. The design and management has been informed by careful consideration of habitat regulations, commoning interests and local circumstances.

The management of the concessions include a wide of control measures to ensure operators are engaged in key messaging including New Forest Code, minimal packaging and litter picking. Operators provide more eyes and ears on the Forest to identify and highlight any issues arising to our team, which has proved invaluable.

Since our revised approach has been enacted, there has been a significant improvement in their operation, we have not experienced issues including livestock interaction and received lots of complimentary feedback from forest users and customers that include members of the New Forest community.

The two concessions bought to Court today build on a long legacy at those car parks. They reflect our improved offer and management, and details have been discussed with the Verderers over the last few months including site visits. Precise locations for the proposals have been agreed including fencing adjustments where appropriate.

Forestry England believe this represents a continuation of what has been offered for many years and that all real or perceived concerns have been considered and mitigated, but we bring this to Court at the request of the Verderers."

PRESENTMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

2026/14914 A31 FIRE Presentment by Mrs Lyndsey Stride Practicing Commoner

"Good morning Official Verderer, Verderers and members of the public. My name is Lyndsey Stride, I am a New Forest commoner and resident of Emery Down.

My presentment today regards the Fire on the A31 and the subsequent media storm that ensued.

The Fire

On the afternoon of Sunday, the 9th August my husband Robert and I were checking our ponies south of the A31. At approximately 5.30pm we spotted smoke from a vehicle fire and called the Fire Brigade, informing them that there was both a vehicle fire and that the fire was travelling at speed down the central reservation in the dense gorse. You could clearly see the fire jumping 20 yds at a time.

We could see that vehicles were trapped by the flames. As the fire advanced towards the stationary traffic, periodically we could see cars driving at speed through the burning gorse, at one point a large tanker had no choice but to drive through. We travelled quickly to Backley Pound and arrived at the same time as the first police vehicle. Our knowledge of the area, plus the support of Philip and Jehanna Stride, enabled us to support the evacuation of cars from the A31, something that felt like ten minutes, but which took nearly an hour. It is my strong belief that people's lives were in danger that day. A van and horse box went through; it's driver obviously relieved to be away from the flames.

We then watched for many hours as the fire slowly progressed through the heathland and eventually into Bratley Wood and Soldiers Bog. It was clear that both the previous winter's prescribed burns and the wetland significantly reduced the impact and passage of the fire and prevented it from getting into Oakley.

There wasn't a plan to follow for those of us on the ground. Local knowledge and skills were not valued until it was too late to make a significant difference. What felt like impossible and dangerous terrain for urban firefighters was an area which local keepers and Forest workers knew intimately. Every ditch, bog, bank and tree was known to them. Yet FE protocol prevented the expert burning teams from assisting the Fire Service.

We cannot change what happened, but we can ensure the lessons are learned to protect the Forest and people's homes from future fires.

Communications

I was a child the last time a large fire engulfed the A31, a time when Facebook didn't exist. The ensuing media storm that followed the fire was perhaps even more impactful and also requires a full enquiry so that lessons can be learned.
There were no facts from trusted sources. No voice of reason or hope to dispel myths or calm fears. Instead, there were doom laden headlines and click bait statements. The impact of this was felt by people both near and far:

- Poor communication about road closures left residents in Emery Down and Burley fearful that their homes were in danger from the fire, they were not.

- People were led to believe that the fire 'raged' for days and even weeks out of control. It did not.
- Visitors believed that a huge area of the New Forest had burned. It was less than 1%.
- The public were led to believe that this was ecological Armageddon, there has yet to be a full ecological survey published but experienced ecologists understand that fire is a part of the natural cycle of the Forest. Green shoots were pushing through the ground within days. In nature there are always winners and losers.
- Animal lovers were led to believe that the ponies were both starving and desperate for water. They were surrounded by hundreds of hectares of plentiful food and water.

The truth was ignored in favour of melodrama.

The consequences of the fire have revealed the complex interconnection between the economy, society, cultural heritage and the natural environment and wider lessons should be learned.

My first request of the Verderers is that you ensure there is a full, transparent multi agency enquiry into the Fire, taking into consideration the views of those on the ground as well as experts including the Fire Service, Police, FE staff including the experienced prescribed Burning Team and local ecologists. It is critical that important lessons are learned. To protect not just the flora and fauna of the Forest but people's homes and livelihoods.

My second request is that a coordinated Fire Management Plan which values local knowledge is created as a matter of urgency. Mitigation activity for the prevention of summer wildfires in 2027 will need to be carried out this winter to protect people's homes, keep roads open and create fire breaks to slow wildfires.

And finally, I would urge the Verderers, Forestry England, National Park Authority, CDA and Emergency Services to co-ordinate their communications so that timely, balanced, factually accurate information is shared in the event of an emergency. Communications should focus on the event and should NOT be used as an opportunity to raise organisational issues or champion individual organisations.

Sun Yzu an Ancient Chinese General, strategist and Philosopher said:
'Plan for what is difficult while it is easy, do what is great while it is small'

The climate is changing and we must prepare for it."

2026/14915 A31 FIRE Presentment by Sarah Nield, Chair of the New Forest Association (NFA)

"Official Verderer, Verderers and the members of public attending court today, I am Sarah Nield, Chair of the New Forest Association (NFA).

I wish to extend the Associations thanks to all those who helped to control and then extinguish the fire that has devastated a large area south of the A31 around Brackley Holmes, Brackley Bottom and part of Bratley Wood. Many have been involved but particular thanks must go to local commoners, the firefighters, Forestry England and to the volunteers who sustained and guided the frontline. It was combined efforts that prevented wider devastation and has given the Forest a good chance of recovery. There are no doubt lessons to be learnt for the future in how to tackle Forest wildfires which, with climate change ever more evident, are a growing risk. We thus welcome the formation of a multi-agency Recovery Co-ordination Group, with the contribution of this court, to take that learning forward.

Environmental experts, including those from Forestry England, Natural England, New Forest Association and the New Forest Biodiversity Forum, are beginning to assess the habitat, wildlife and other ecological damage as well as what measures (if any) can help support recovery and minimise the risk of future fires. On the open heath and in the mires, nature has already begun the long recovery process encouraged by the recent welcome rain. Livestock too are playing their part in suppressing more vigorous new growth. The impact on the Ancient and Ornamental woodland at Bratley is more worrying and it will take time to assess how badly it has suffered and whether at least some recovery and regeneration is possible.

In looking to future management, keeping fuel for fires (eg heather and other vegetation) in check as well as managing fire risk from recreation is going to be key. Ensuring adequate stock levels, controlled burning and effective enforcement of controls over open fires & barbecues (eg PSPOs) all play their part. Scarcely believable have been incidents of continued use of barbecues and fires as well as evidence of arson. Of course, this court and Forestry England already work together to manage fire risk. This fire has demonstrated just how important this work is and we urge them to continue and, where possible, develop further effective fire control measures."

2026/14916 DOG FOULING Presentment by Jim Greenwood, Practicing Commoner

"The enforcement of parking restrictions and introduction of charges has been effective in preventing much of the gateway and some types of verge parking but has had other consequences. Some of the car parks have become less busy and others more so. I happen to live near one which has become more used, or I should say abused. There is a constant stream of dog walkers, both private individuals and commercial businesses. From early in the morning there can be four vans at any one time disgorging large numbers of dogs from each, sometimes seven loose dogs from one vehicle. Those same vans might return once or more during the day. Some are sign written, some not.

Dog walking has become a huge local industry since Covid and I am reliably told that there are around 100 commercial dog walkers who have signed up to a voluntary code of practice. I wonder how many have not signed up and how many of the total do not comply.

A few days ago I marked out a five meter square on the lawn adjacent to the car park and then counted the piles of dog muck within that area. There were 19 piles in that 25 sq. m., so not far off 1 per sq. m.

Some of the dogs may be wormed and killing the dung beetles and others not wormed. In either case it is a damaging abuse of the SSSI, and of the rights and privileges of commoners and other members of the public due to the disgusting state of the lawn for walkers, picnickers who regularly sit on the grass and, of course, a disease risk for the grazing stock.

On the same day that I counted dung piles I saw someone park on the track, let two large dogs out and not even bother to close the car door because they were only there for one brief purpose.

I am fed up with confronting people and spoiling my day and theirs. What will be done by the several bodies with an interest in, and an ability to, take effective control of this abuse?"

2026/14917 BOVINE TB Presentment by Mark Ferrett, Practising Commoner

"Good morning Verderers and the Court.

On Thursday 9th April, the APHA spoke to cattle commoners at Lyndhurst Community Centre, about the New Forest TB Control Plan. It was highlighted that private groups and governing bodies are able to apply for and run programmes to trap and vaccinate badgers in a local area.

It was discussed at the meeting that the western boundary of the New Forest, and the private estates there, running from north to south along the Avon Valley, would be a prime target for such a project.

Badger culling has taken place for a number of years there, but this has now stopped, creating a dangerous vacuum and high risk of infected badger movement. This is when badgers are free to move in from higher risk areas like Wimborne, Blandford and even further west.

If it was possible to vaccinate badgers in these areas, we could reduce the risk of them spreading TB to our Forest Herd. Which in turn could help protect beef production, commoners businesses and especially animal welfare.

Having been affected by TB on three separate occasions this situation is very personal to me and my family, on the last occasion thirteen beef suckler cows, seven months in calf were taken from our farm with only three confirmed with TB, let me tell you Court, my daughter who runs our farms beef enterprise was devastated knowing that thirteen of her cows which she bred were to be loaded with a baby calf in them only two months away from giving birth.

Another massive blow a pedigree Aberdeen Angus bull of our own but with another commoner was taken as well for slaughter and not conformed to have TB.

We must ensure that we take every measure to protect the Forest Herd and the devastating blow of which my daughter experienced at our holding.

So, is anybody looking into this idea further, and what should our first steps be? Prevention is better than a cure, we are in a unique situation where the Forest Herd is TB free"

2026/14918 A31 Fire Presentment by Lucie Rowe, Practising Commoner

"Good morning, Official Verderer, Verderers and all attending Court this morning.

My name is Lucie Rowe and some of you may recall that in a previous presentment that I made to Court in June 2025, I did say that should there be a fire in the Forest, I would be back!

In my previous presentment I was asking for more of the fallen timber in the woods to be removed or re-sited to ensure the rides were kept clear and to remove the fuel load that the dead dry timber creates for a fire. I mentioned the filling stations at Picket Post on the A31 as a point of my concern should fire spread across Picket plain. Living in Totton as I do, yet having my land at Linford, near Ringwood, I use the A31 road regularly, so I am all too aware of the huge volume of traffic on that road at all times. With August being holiday season it is often more like a car park than a road! Sadly, gone are the days when my mother as a child could go to Picket Post on her pony to stop the traffic to bring the cows across the road and home to be milked.

So, now it is with a heavy heart that I find myself returning as promised and let me assure you that I take no pleasure from being here. On the 9th of August there was a fire which started on the A31. Fortunately, the wind direction on that evening swept the fire away from the vehicles travelling on that road meaning that there were no human lives lost but things could have been very different. Now, we all fully comprehend the danger, destruction and disruption that a major fire in the Forest brings – because we have all experienced it first hand!

The obvious fire hazard across this stretch of the Forest is a vehicle, and as I have said, there are thousands of them heading west to the coast, to Bournemouth, Devon & Cornwall. Literally thousands of cars, lorries, vans and buses are on that road that divides the Forest and with every extra vehicle the risk of fire becomes ever higher. The hot weather, call it climate change if you will, means that everything alongside this road is tinder dry only taking seconds to ignite – as has now been proved. Can I also mention the huge amounts of litter that is strewn along the length of this road and the bins that are overflowing in the laybys posing yet more of a fire risk?
Like all commoners, the Forest is very dear to me, and I would prefer that I never had to come back to talk about fires in the Forest but surely you must now take heed of this 'silly old woman' and review some of the land management practices here.

I have to ask you – what actions were taken following my presentment? The only answer given out by The Verderers at the July 2025 court meeting was that "*the Forestry England policy articulates a minimum volume of deadwood, for the Ancient Woodlands, but it does not specify a maximum, other than allowing for key access tracks to be cleared*". So, are all those access tracks cleared? It was announced that the policy was overdue for review, so did that review happen and was the risk of fire discussed with any preventative measures being adopted?

Having highlighted the probability of having a fire here in the Forest did any discussion take place with Hampshire Highways regarding the excessive growth of gorse and foliage in the central reservation of the A31? Common sense would tell you that this had become a huge fuel load for a fire.

I recall that the Forestry Commission used to cut a wide swathe along the inside of that main road's fencelines in the hope that it would help act as a firebreak, why is that practice no longer continued? Is it a matter of cost because this fire has incurred a massive cost to the whole economy. I have heard that they estimate costs at one million pounds a day whilst that A31 was closed.

Now, I am aware that the Verderers are not in charge of the weather, or the roads, neither are they in charge of the holiday makers or the Council overseeing the highways but they are, and I quote from the Verderers website, 'the governing body responsible for protecting and managing the traditional rights, landscape and ecology of the New Forest" - so I would hope that the Verderers have an important influence on the land management of the New Forest and the implementation of adaptations that may be necessary if we are to experience these ultra hot conditions each summer.

So, I have not come here to say "I told you so" as I had promised, I have come here to ask that the Verderers to use their influence to push for any changes in the land management that may be required to ensure that we don't see a repeat of this terrible fire, and I say beware of the re-wilding trend. The New Forest may seem like a wild place, but it has survived to remain as this ecologically significant place by being managed, all land needs to be carefully managed.

Finally, as I finish my presentment today, I would like to use the opportunity of speaking at this public forum to extend my personal thanks to all those who worked tirelessly to put out the major fire that engulfed the heathland and forest in the

Backley area recently. I do hope that lessons will be learned from this dreadful incident."

2026/14919 MILLERSFORD BOTTOM PROPOSED WETLAND RESTORATION Presentment by Charlie Riddoch, Practising Commoner

"Good morning Official Verderer, Verderers and members of the public.

I am horrified to learn that, yet another area of the Forest is to be subjected to a so called "restoration". The latest target being Millersford.

This is such a beautiful area, and I cannot comprehend why anyone would want to deliberately destroy it, which is what will happen if Forestry England are allowed to go ahead with their plans.

Why would anyone in their right mind want to fell hundreds of trees, many of them big, mature trees, doing their job of sequestering carbon, keeping the ground beneath them cool and damp.

And as for what will happen to all the lovely habitats along this extensive stretch of forest stream, all the small creatures who live in the stream and along its banks will be killed, crushed, buried alive, and all the bats, birds, of prey, owls, nightjars, who rely on the small mammals and insects who at present thrive there. How will this affect them? But then they won't be there either as their trees will have been cut down!

Have FE done a survey to assess the wildlife that live there? Are there any rare species? You or I would have would have to carry out EIA's to do any kind of major works to our properties or on our land, are FE exempt from the law?

And how will the stock be affected by all this work? Right now they have a lovely clean easily accessible stream to drink from, trees for shade and shelter along its banks, they can cross the stream safely and easily to find new grazing. This will not be so if this devastation goes ahead. The area will be transformed into a morass of mud, dead, dying and broken trees will litter the ground. Big machines will have made huge ruts in the ground, all of this hazardous for the stock that use this area, not to mention the loss of grazing that will occur. But then I think we all know what to expect from the results of FE's "restorations".

Let's not forget the bridges that will be removed, to be replaced by fords that will be impassable for most of the year, again hazardous for the stock and the people who manage them. In fact, it will become a no go area for everyone who would normally enjoy walking or riding there.

This brings me to the bogs or mires along the length of the stream, which is what this is all about, the stream drains the bogs, they say, so why are the bogs still full of water, after all the centuries they have been there surely the mires would be completely dry by now if this were the case. However I think the works FE are planning could actually be detrimental to the health of the mires. I think it will completely unbalance the delicate ecosystem of this area resulting in the breakdown of structure of the mires.

These works will be a crime against nature and a tragedy for the Forest. It should be stopped. There are many people who feel as I do that these restorations are wrong. So please ladies and gentlemen of the Verderers, please help prevent these works from happening. The future of the Forest is in your hands."

The Head Agister closed the Court

IN COMMITTEE (in the Library)

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2026/14920	THANK YOU TO FORESTRY ENGLAND	DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer thanked the Deputy Surveyor and his team for their support while the Verderers Office was closed due to staff holiday and sickness.

The Deputy Surveyor passed on his best wishes to Mrs Woodley for a speedy recovery.

2026/14921	DOG FOULING	DISCHARGE

The Court discussed that dog fouling is a major issue in the Forest, especially at the busier "honeypot" car parks. The Court has recently contributed to the purchase of pooh bags as part of a campaign run by the New Forest Dog Owners Group.

The Official Verderer said he would like to see commercial dog walkers licensed in the Forest. He suggested Forestry England conduct a survey on commercial dog walkers to give an idea of the number using the Forest and the ratio of dogs to walkers. The Code of Conduct suggests a maximum of 6 dogs be walked at a time.

The Deputy Surveyor said the Ranger Team do engage with dog walkers on issues including picking up after their dogs. He said he is open to a discussion with NFDOG as part of the Recreation Management Strategy.

2026/14922	BOVINE TB	RESUME

The Court agreed the management of badgers to create a TB free buffer zone between the Forest, and the Avon Valley is a good idea. However, the Court does not have the powers or the resources to co-ordinate a project of this scale.

Mr Deakin said the Court has the responsibility of looking after the commoners and the Verderers TB Plan goes some way to doing this. The matter is resumed to the next Court when Mr Manley the Defra Appointed Verderer will be present.

2026/14923	MILLERSFORD BOTTOM PROPOSED WETLAND RESTORATION	DISCHARGE

The Court noted Ms. Riddoch's comments and will take them into consideration when a proposal is received from Forestry England.

2026/14924	A31 FIRE	RESUME

The Official Verderer said many working groups have been set up since the fire, and the Court has representatives sitting on them.

The Deputy Surveyor said Forestry England is conducting its own review led by Mike Pittock, and the Hampshire Fire Service review is due to start in October.

The Court discussed the need for local knowledge when dealing with wildfires, and the requirement for FE staff to be included in the fire command centre. Mr Stride said he strongly believes the knowledge of the FE Burning Team could have stopped the fire from reaching Bratley Wood. The Deputy Surveyor said the scale of the fire would have been too much for Forestry England staff to have controlled. He said the lives of his staff were more of a priority than the heathland.

The Deputy Surveyor said the New Forest deadwood policy still stands and aligns with the new SAC plan; Forestry England do clear deadwood if its blocking access. Deadwood does not generally present a wildfire threat – ancient & ornamental woodlands are quite resilient from a wildfire perspective, relative to the dry open forest habitats.

NEW SUBMISSIONS BY FORESTRY ENGLAND

2026/14925 ICE CREAM VAN CONCESSIONS AT LINFORD BOTTOM AND VERELEY — DISCHARGE

Forestry England's request for a four-year extension to the current ice cream sales from 2028 to 2032 is approved with no objections.

2026/14926 MOBILE REFRESHMENT SALES AT BOLTONS BENCH AND WILVERLEY — RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor said that following a site visit with Mrs Tilbury and Mr Pasmore his team has worked hard to mitigate the concerns raised by the Court.

Mrs Tilbury said that following the site visit she has obtained figures of PSPO engagement at Boltons Bench which are a lot higher than in other areas of the Forest. The Deputy Surveyor said there are other issues at Boltons Bench and the stock interactions cannot be blamed on food sales alone.

The matter will be resumed later in the meeting.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS COURTS OF CONCERN TO FORESTRY ENGLAND

2026/14927 FORESTRY ENGLAND CAR PARKING CHARGES — RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor said the Car Park Wardens are still monitoring displacement parking in the Forest. The Court raised several areas of concern where verge parking has increased including Brockishill Road, Bolderwood Road, Blackgutter on the B3078 and Tethering Drove/Hale Purlieu. The Deputy Surveyor said fines are being issued to vehicles parking on verges.

Miss Harrison asked the Deputy Surveyor to confirm how many parking staff are on patrol at any one time and how many fines have been issued. The Official Verderer said it would be helpful for the Court to have information on parking enforcement both in and

outside of the car parks. The Deputy Surveyor will check with his team and report back to the Court. Action DS

2026/14928 PENNY MOOR RESUME MARCH 27

Following the site visit the fence has been removed by Forestry England. The Court would still like to see a causeway installed for year-round access for stock management. Both Mr Deakin and Mrs Tilbury have revisited the site and say they expect it to revert to bog when the conditions become wet.

2026/14929 TARMACKED CAR PARK ENTRANCES DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer thanked Mr Adderley for his work putting together the photographs and report. He asked for the report to be updated with photos of how the car parks look now. Action OA

Mr Pasmore said the Court has never given consent for the use of tarmac and that all requests should have come via a presentment. He said the Court Minutes from 2000 make this very clear. The Official Verderer agreed the minutes do not show consent but added that they do not show any objection to the tarmac either, which has been in some places for more than 20 years.

Any new requests for tarmac must come to Court by way of a presentment.

2026/14930 SIGNAGE DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin said the Livestock Interaction Group have agreed terms of reference at their second meeting and aim to have an action plan ready for the next tourist season.

2026/14931 CADNAM CRICKET CLUB RESUME

Mr Adderley said he met with the club at the end of July and they raised some grey areas in their licence. Mr Adderley has obtained legal quotes to redraw the club's licence and legally formalise the grey areas including throwing open the outfield and parking.

The Official Verderer said that due to the proximity of the club to the car park, he considered it unlikely the Court would consent to a new licence that allowed parking on the Crown Land if that were presented to the Court.

2026/14932 PROTOCOL FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND CONSENTS RELATING TO FOREST CAMPSITES RESUME

The Official Verderer said he will meet with Mr Adderley to discuss and agree a protocol for the campsites. Action OV/OA

2026/14933 BROCKENHURST VILLAGE SIGNAGE RESUME

Mrs Tilbury and Miss Harrison met with Hampshire County Council and Brockenhurst Parish Council to discuss the village signage. HCC are going to submit a revised proposal to the Court.

2026/14934 EAST BOLDRE VILLAGE HALL DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin said the damage caused to the SSSI by the unauthorised works are slowly re-instating.

2026/14935 TRACY COOPERS DRIVE 8TH & 9TH AUGUST 2026 DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor said he is not aware of any major issues during the event.

Lots of cattle grid bypass gates were left open around the Woodlands area as were gates into the inclosures.

Mr Deakin said NFDC had erected a CCTV tower again without consent and large warning signs were placed at the cattle grid at Balmer Lawn.

2026/14936 VERGE PROTECTION WORKS: LAYBYS DISCHARGE

Adam Harrington shared the Verge Protection Works: Layby's document electronically following the last Court.

ID:213 Godshill Wood. Miss Sevier raised concerns via email regarding the closure of the layby saying larger vehicles would struggle to make the turn.

ID:16 Longcross, B3078. Miss Harrison said she would like the layby retained for stock management purposes. Mr Chatters suggested parking be enforced by a "no unauthorised parking" approach.

ID:13 Homey Ridge B3078. Miss Harrison asked for the layby to be retained for stock management purposes.

Ditching is requested at a 40m stretch of broken gravel at Black Gutter on the B3078 to prevent cars parking on the grazing.

Mrs Tilbury requested some carefully placed dragons teeth on the bend at Dark Water, Exbury Road, to prevent further erosion of the grazing by large vehicles using the lane as a rat run.

Mr Pasmore said the turning space on the B3078 at Telegraph is being parked on meaning lorries and larger vehicles are struggling to make the right hand turn onto Roger Penny Way from the B3080.

DE-MINIMIS PROPOSALS

2026/14937 DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS - UTILITY PROPOSALS AGREED BY THE DE-MINIMIS COMMITTEE RESUME

DM0248	Jul 26	Mr Will Bradshaw, Moortop, Shirley Holmes, replacement water main in access track to house
DM0249	Jul 26	BT Openreach, removal of 26 wooden BT poles from Holmsley Passage

DM0250	Aug 26	Boldre Parish Council, installation by HCC of two sleeves to hold SID's at entrance to Norleywood village and Norleywood crossroads

EMERGENCY WORKS CARRIED OUT BY UTILITY COMPANIES

2026/14938 EMERGENCY WORKS CARRIED OUT BY UTILITY COMPANIES — RESUME

EM0037	Jul 26	Southern Water, replacement of a leaking stopcock, Acorn Cottage, Pinkney Lane, Bank
EM0038	Jul 26	South West Water, leak on water main, Crowders, Fritham
EM0039	Aug 26	South West Water, leak on water main, Bashley Common Road near the Rising Sun
EM0040	Aug 26	South West Water, leak on water main, Hale Purlieu
EM0041	Aug 26	South West Water, leak on water main, West Cottage, Manchester Road, Sway
EM0042	Aug 26	South West Water, leak on water main, The Old School House, Fritham Court, Fritham
EM0043	Aug 26	South West Water, leak on meter box and 250mm comm pipe, 1 Frogmore Cottages, Norleywood

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2026/14939 SSSI RESTORATION LIST — DISCHARGE

Mr Stride said the works to install a ford at Knightwood have been completed.

The remainder of the SSSI Restoration list was noted.

ENCROACHMENTS ON FORESTRY ENGLAND LAND INCLUDING THE ENCROACHMENTS LIST

2026/14940 ENCROACHMENTS LIST — RESUME

Nothing has been added to the Encroachments List this month.

2026/14941 HOLLYBANK, CHAPEL LANE, EAST BOLDRE — DISCHARGE

Mr Adderley said the property owner has moved the fence out to the registered boundary in keeping with the property next door.

Mr Deakin said there may be a Prescriptive Rights issue for the Commoners Defence Association to investigate but that the area enclosed is mostly gravel with very little grazing lost.

Mr Chatters reported a similar potential encroachment on Masseys Lane which Mr Adderley will investigate. — Action OA

ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION BY FORESTRY ENGLAND

2026/14942 ACTION LIST — RESUME

The Action List was noted.

2026/14943 ADVERTISING SIGN AT LONGCROSS B3078 — RESUME

Mr Pasmore said the large advertising signs had been removed but have now reappeared at Longcross on the B3078.

Mr Stride said he had tried to remove them but needed a screwdriver as they have been fixed to the post with jubilee clips. Mr Adderley is asked to arrange for their removal. — Action OA

2026/14944 FOREST BRIDGES — RESUME

Mr Stride said he has compiled a list of issues with Forest bridges which he would like to discuss with Forestry England. Mr Adderley said he will obtain a list of ongoing works from the Civils Team for Mr Stride to cross reference. — Action RS/OA

Mr Deakin said the works have been carried out at Balmer Lawn, but they are not what had been agreed. Five bridges were removed, three of which were to have been replaced with vehicle crossings. The installed crossings are only 4 foot wide. Mr Deakin will raise with the Forestry England Civil Engineering Team. — Action RD

ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

2026/14945 FENCE AT HATCHET POND — DISCHARGE

Mr Chatters said he has emailed the Deputy Surveyor prior to the meeting to ensure that a sunset clause applies to some fencing erected at Hatchet Pond to allow for ground regeneration. Mr Deakin said it would be difficult to set a date for its removal as the regeneration has not started yet.

Mr Chatters will provide the Deputy Surveyor with a grid reference following the meeting.

2026/14946 WATER MONITORING EQUIPMENT — RESUME

Mr Pasmore asked for the water monitoring equipment to be removed following the recent studies carried out at Cunninger Bottom. — Action OA

2026/14947 BOXING DAY POINT TO POINT — DISCHARGE

Mr Stride said the Point-to-Point organisers have asked to use Forestry England car parks for spectator parking, but they have been told that parking charges will be enforced. The Deputy Surveyor confirmed that spectators will be expected to pay to park.

2026/14948 VERDERERS HALL SOUND SYSTEM — DISCHARGE

Mrs Tilbury asked the Deputy Surveyor if the audio Visual equipment in the Verderers Hall could be reviewed. There is often

feedback on the sound system and an intermittent fault in the projector wiring.

2026/14949 GATE TO ANNEXE COURTYARD DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer asked if the gate into the courtyard could be repaired. Mr Adderley said repairs are in hand.

2026/14950 PHOTOGRAPHY DURING THE OPEN COURT DISCHARGE

Mr Pasmore said a photograph had been taken by a member of the public during the Open Court. The Official Verderer will make an announcement at the next Court reminding people that recording and photography are not permitted.

The Official Verderer asked if a sign could be placed on the public door into the Hall advising that recording, videoing and photography are not permitted.

2026/14951 NEW FOREST MARATHON DISCHARGE

Mrs Tilbury said the marathon had caused chaos in Brockenhurst on Sunday. Cars were parked on verges along Rhinefield Road and Meerut Road and some cars had been driven onto the Forest and appeared abandoned. She asked if the Parking Enforcement team could be involved in future events.

2026/14952 FORESTRY ENGLAND ESTATES OFFICER DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor said Helen Lynch has been appointed as the new Estates Officer.

2026/14953 PARKING AT KINGS HOUSE DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor said parking is becoming increasingly difficult at Kings House. People are asked not to verge park but to use the car park at Boltons Bench and walk to Kings House.

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

ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM EARLIER IN THE MEETING REQUIRING FURTHER DISCUSSION BY THE VERDERERS

2026/14954 FOOD CONCESSION VAN AT WILVERLEY DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer asked if the Court feels the request from Forestry England is contentious. Mr Pasmore said he believes it is, Mr Deakin said the Court agreed in January that it is not.

The Court discussed the request for the two-year extension at length. The request is approved with the Official Verderer using his casting vote. The consent is for the two-year extension to the current consent and will expire in April 2028.

Whilst the Court has approved this short extension, they would prefer to see the van inside a fenced area, and this will be

discussed should the site come back to Court for consideration again.

2026/14955 FOOD CONCESSION VAN AT BOLTONS BENCH — RESUME

Forestry England's request for a food concession van at Boltons Bench is considered contentious under the Courts Regulations.

Therefore, the Court has held off making a decision until the October Verderers Court to allow members of the public and other interested parties to make a presentment.

The Deputy Surveyors presentment will be published on the Verderers website. — Action Clerk

2026/14956 A31 FIRE — RESUME

Mr Stride raised his concerns regarding the number of independent reviews and how lessons will be learnt and things moved forward.

Miss Harrison said more land management is required, Mr Stride said Forestry England do what they can but have a very small team.

The matter will be discussed further at the October Court.

MATTERS ARISING

2026/14957 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1877 NEW FOREST ACT — DISCHARGE

Miss Sevier, as Chair of the sub-committee provided an update ahead of Court.

The Official Verderer said now is the time to start confirming the details of what each organisation is doing. He will speak to Miss Sevier once she is feeling better.

Mr Gammon said he is meeting with the Heritage Centre next week to discuss their ideas for the celebration. He said they are also planning a display for William the Conqueror's 1000 birthday.

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME & THE VERDERERS' GRAZING SCHEME

2026/14958 VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME — RESUME

A meeting is to be held on Wednesday 23rd September to discuss the payment of an additional cattle supplement. The Official Verderer will forward a Zoom invitation to the VGS Committee. — Action OV

The Court discussed the number of commoners calving on the Forest. Mr Deakin said commoners are proud of their Forest Rights and will fight to keep them, but they must exercise their rights responsibly.

The Verderers have issued guidelines for calving on the Forest and cannot financially support irresponsible Commoning.

2026/14959 FUTURE AGRI-ENVIRONMENT SCHEME (LANDSCAPE RECOVERY/COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP SCHEME) RESUME

Mr Gammon has circulated an email to the Verderers ahead of the Court. The Foundation for Common Land are now looking for a contractor rather than an employee as no suitable applications were received for the facilitators position.

2026/14960 UPLIFT IN HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME DISCHARGE

The Court discussed that as the scheme only has a year to run, we are unlikely to have an uplift agreed at this time.

The Official Verderer is arranging a meeting with Jenny Thomas of Natural England and will discuss the impending end of the HLS scheme and the implications of not having a successor scheme in place.

REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2026/14961 LANDSCAPE CONNECTIONS PROJECT DISCHARGE

Mr Gammon updated the Court following the meeting he attended with Miss Sevier.

2026/14962 ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP – A31 FIRE DISCHARGE

Mr Gammon updated the Court following the recent meeting he attended. He said Mr Chatters has provided a very helpful report to the group.

The ongoing management of the fire site will be discussed at the next OFAC meeting, and Mr Gammon urged the Verderers to attend if they are able to.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

2026/14963 ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2026 DISCHARGE

The accounts were approved and signed by the Official Verderer.

HEALTH & SAFETY

2026/14964 DEFIBRILLATOR DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin said it has been suggested that the defibrillator donated to the Livestock Society should be available at the drifts. He and the Agisters are looking to nominate someone who attends the drifts to hold it.

STAFF MATTERS

2026/14965 STAFF LIAISON COMMITTEE MINUTES RESUME

The minutes were noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2026/14966	COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE RELATING TO VERDERERS	RESUME
	The matter is resumed until October.	
2026/14967	RESPONSE TO THE NFNPA LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION	DISCHARGE
	The draft response is approved and will be submitted by the Clerk.	
2026/14968	WINTER WELFARE TOUR	DISCHARGE
	Mr Deakin said the welfare tour will be held on Friday 11th December	
2026/14969	NEWLANDS PASSAGE	DISCHARGE
	Mr Pasmore said Hampshire County Council and the National Trust had agreed to carry out works to restore the horse crossing at Newlands Passage this summer but the works have not been done. The Clerk said the last update she had received from HCC in August is that they are sourcing funding for the works as the National Trust is no longer able finance their half of the project.	
2026/14970	COFFEE SALES AT CAMPSITES	RESUME
	Mrs Tilbury said she is surprised to see both Hollands Wood and Roundhills campsites selling coffee from the office. Mr Pasmore said there is a list of items which campsites are approved to sell. The Clerk is asked to circulate the list.	Action Clerk
2026/14971	PIGS AND VICINAGE	RESUME
	Mr Stride said the issue of pigs and Vicinage had been raised at the last meeting of Commoners Defence Association.	
	The Court discussed that for Pur cause de Vicinage to apply there must be equal rights between the Common and the Crown Land which is not the case outside of Pannage.	
2026/14972	PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF LAND OFF ELLINGHAM DROVE, MOYLES COURT	DISCHARGE
	The Court discussed the planning application for a change of use from agricultural land to an enclosed dog walking area. The Environment Agency have objected to the application on the grounds of it being a flood plain and the proposed fencing being unsuitable.	
	The Court agreed not to make a representation on the application.	

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 15:18 hrs

31st October '26