

**MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 17th April 2019 at
9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.**

PRESENT:	Lord Manners	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Mr A B Dowsett	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Mr J Greenwood	Elected Verderer
	Clr Edward Heron	National Park Appointed Verderer
	Miss D Macnair MBE	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mr G M H Mills DL	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mr A H Pasmore	Elected Verderer
	Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer

APOLOGIES:	Mr D Readhead	Elected Verderer
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IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2019/10421	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	RESUME
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The Minutes of Court held on Wednesday, 20th March 2019 were approved and signed.

2019/10422	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	RESUME
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Declarations of interest can be found on the Verderers' website – www.verderers.org.uk. The Declarations of Interest will be reviewed in October 2019.

October
2019

2019/10423	CONDITION OF STOCK	RESUME
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The Forest needs rain. The weather has been dry and sunny with a breeze. As a result, the grass is not yet coming through and the condition of stock reflects the fact that there is not much food on the Forest.

However, overall, stock is not looking too bad. There are perhaps more ponies than usual whose condition is borderline but many are looking well. If the grass starts to grow things will improve but if not, some animals will have to be removed. Some animals have already moved into the valley bottoms where there is some new vegetation growth. There is concern that commoners will soon be turning out their cattle, as there is a shortage of fodder following the very dry summer last year.

2019/10424	BOVINE TB	RESUME
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There are ongoing TB issues. Two weeks ago, cattle were identified which fall into a 3km radial testing zone but to date no letters have been sent to the cattle owners whose herds are affected. In the meantime, some cattle have been turned out and they will potentially mix with other herds which are not in the 3km area. This TB breakdown has not been well managed. Mr Greenwood is drafting a letter to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) on behalf of the Commoners' Defence Association to complain. It was agreed the Court should also write. The Clerk requested a copy of Mr Greenwood's letter, on which she will base a letter from the Court.

Action
JG/Clerk

The Court feels that if a commoner has turned out cattle which need testing, it may be possible, under the byelaws, to insist they are caught and returned home for testing. This should help ensure compliance with APHAs requirements and reduce the risk of spreading TB to other parts of the Forest.

2019/10425 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND RESUME
COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Forest Ponies	4538	4547
Forest Cattle	2816	2709
Forest Donkeys	110	111
Forest Pigs	0	0
Forest Sheep	0	0
Total Forest Stock	7464	7367
Common Ponies	600	576
Common Cattle	2816	1195
Common Donkeys	110	63
Common Pigs	0	21
Common Sheep	0	89
Total Common Stock	2161	1944
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	7464	7367
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	2031	1834
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	9495	9201
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	9625	9311

The Clerk explained that her assistant, Justine Bayley, has been working extremely hard to ensure that all the figures are available for this Court. Miss Bayley entered £91,000 of marking fees in one day last week. The Court wished for its thanks to Justine, to be recorded in these Minutes.

2019/10426 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT RESUME

A small number of two-year-old colts remain at large on the Forest. Their owners are relying on the Agisters to catch them. The Staff Committee feels these owners should be penalised under the VGS. This will be decided when the VGS Committee next meets. In the case of one commoner in particular, he has also relied on the Agisters to catch poor ponies for him and a discussion took place as to whether he should lose payments in respect of those animals as well. This will also be put on the Agenda for the next VGS meeting.

Action
OV/VGS Ctte

It was suggested that a marker should be put down in the form of an announcement, warning commoners that they may be penalised if they do not manage their stock properly and rely too heavily on the Agisters. The Clerk suggested if an autumn newsletter is sent out, a reminder could be included in that as well.

2019/10427 ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS RESUME

The Announcements and Decisions were approved.

OPEN COURT – 10.00 a.m.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Bruce Rothnie, Deputy Surveyor
Mr Paul Grugeon, Land Agent (New Forest)

The Head Agister opened the Court with the usual proclamation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

2019/10428 GARDEN WASTE

We are approaching the time of year when we will all be cutting our lawns and tidying our gardens after the winter. Please may we remind residents that lawn mowings are very dangerous to ponies and donkeys and they must not be left where the animals can get to them. Tipping your grass cuttings over the fence or emptying a bag on the Open Forest may be a cheap and easy way of disposing of your garden waste, but it can result in a very sick or dead pony.

Mown grass left in a heap heats up and when eaten, the resulting gasses that accumulate in the stomach of a pony or donkey can result in a very painful death for the unfortunate animal. Many garden plants and shrubs are toxic and can also cause illness or the death of any animal which eats them. Please dispose of your garden waste responsibly. Compost it on your property or take it to the tip. Please remember if you live in an area accessible to Forest stock and your garden waste is collected by NFDC always keep the waste sacks inside your boundary for collection.

2019/10429 FOALS ON THE FOREST'S ROADS

The time is approaching when foals will soon be born on the Forest. Like all young things, foals love to play. However, they have no road sense and will run across the road without warning, so we would like to remind drivers to please take extra care in the Forest.

2019/10430 PLEASE DON'T FEED THE ANIMALS

We constantly have to remind people not to hand feed the Forest ponies and donkeys. The Forestry Commission puts up signs and the Ranger teams visit picnic sites and busy car parks talking to people and explaining why it is so important that people don't feed the animals.

Unfortunately, however, despite all our efforts some people ignore our requests and as a result, every year we have to order ponies and donkeys off the Forest because they have become too demanding in trying to persuade people to feed them. This is not fair on the animals which face a very uncertain future and it is not fair on their owners who want their animals to be out on the Forest. Please DON'T feed the animals.

2019/10431 OUT OF CONTROL DOGS

Another commoner's animal has been attacked by a dog.

A donkey was found at the weekend on the Northern Commons with extremely serious injuries to her muzzle, face and neck. The vet who was called to treat the animal confirmed the injuries were definitely been caused by a large dog. The donkey's owner is now incurring costly veterinary fees and the animal is badly traumatised, in a lot of pain and struggling to eat. It is quite possible that the donkey will not survive.

The New Forest is a wonderful place to take a dog for a walk but it is irresponsible and unfair to allow a dog to inflict injury on another animal. Every year several Forest animals are either badly injured or die as a result of dog attacks. Anyone who cannot be certain of keeping a dog in their charge under proper control, should not let it off the lead.

2019/10432 DEFRA'S APPOINTED VERDERER

I am sorry to have to report that Hallam Mills, who has served the Court as Defra's appointed verderer for the past six years, has decided not to seek appointment for a further three years.

Hallam has made a valuable contribution to the running of the Verderers' Court and we will miss his knowledge and wise counsel.

As a result of Hallam deciding to step down in July, Defra is seeking his replacement. An advertisement will appear shortly in the New Milton Advertiser and Lymington Times and a copy of the advert will also be available on our website.

Applicants for this unpaid position should have a good knowledge of animal welfare and in addition, ideally both a working knowledge of livestock and experience of the New Forest's unique system of depasturing stock. In addition, they should have an understanding of the pressures arising from the need to balance the interests of agriculture, conservation, and recreation in the Forest.

Please note that whilst we are happy to answer general queries about the duties of a Verderer, Defra is handling the actual appointment process. Details of how to apply will be contained in the advertisement. Completed applications must be returned to Defra by 31st May 2019.

2019/10433 HLS 2019 CELEBRATION EVENING

Please join us on Wednesday 22nd May from 6pm at Minstead Village Hall for an evening celebrating the work taking place to protect and enhance the internationally important habitats of the New Forest. It will be a great opportunity to look back at the achievements of the HLS scheme over the last 9 years. It is also an opportunity to thank our volunteers who have contributed so much of their time to help deliver the scheme's objectives. The Verderers HLS Scheme is due to expire at the end of February 2020. A great deal of effort is going into trying to secure a future scheme to provide funding for commoning and other environmental support for the Forest. There has been extensive contact with politicians, Defra officials and Natural England. However, it is too soon to predict with any certainty what the outcome of those discussions will be.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2019/10434 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR MARCH 2019

The Agisters attended 12 accidents. This compares with 3 in the same month last year.

5 ponies and 1 donkey were killed. 1 pony and 1 cow were injured. 1 cow was uninjured and 3 animals reportedly involved in accidents, could not be found

2 accidents occurred in daylight, 1 at twilight and 9 in the dark.

4 accidents were not reported by the driver involved. 4 motorists are known to have been local.

The total killed and injured so far in 2019 is 29 compared with 17 in the same period last year.

PRESENTMENTS

2019/10435 COMMERCIAL DOG WALKERS CHARTER

Presentment by Mrs Gale Gould on behalf of the Friends of the New Forest (New Forest Association)

'The Verderers may or may not know that last week the Lymington Times published a correction to their previous article about Commercial Dog Walking Charter, which incorrectly reported the position of the Friends of the New Forest (New Forest Association).

For the avoidance of doubt the views of the Friends of the New Forest are similar to those that have been expressed by the Verderers Court.

Friends of the New Forest does not support the charter because it does not effectively regulate a commercial activity that is taking place on the Forest.

Failing to take early control of activities that have a serious detrimental effect on the Forest results in it being very difficult to control them in the future.

Commercial dog walkers should be required to obtain permission. This would ensure reasonable controls can be put in place including, for example, restricting to four the number of dogs that an individual can walk.

Dogs should be on leads during the bird nesting season, which would bring the Forest in line with the 'Countryside and Rights of Way Act', as observed in many other national parks.

It is our view that all commercial activity carried out on the New Forest should be regulated and require consent on a personal and individual basis. This enables the recording and registration of the person to whom consent is given, so that scale, location and the effects of the activity may be monitored. Consent would be accompanied by conditions (for dog walking this might include the things in this charter, such as numbers of dogs on one lead and when or where dogs should be on a lead).

In contrast, simply issuing a code of behaviour in the form of a Charter for a commercial activity, with no regulation, tacitly accepts the activity as being one that has a general, blanket approval with no means to monitor numbers or have any information about those carrying it out.'

2019/10436 A35 HOLMSLEY BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

Presentment by Mr Kevin Whittle – Parish Councillor and commoner

'I can't understand the reasoning for closing the lay-bys on the A35 in exchange for the land to make way for the new bridge. The current lay-bys cannot be used for grazing as they are on the opposite side of the fence to the animals and the site of the old bridge is not accepted to set aside.

There are other sites that can be used i.e. move the cattle grid from Holmsley Lodge to the old tollhouse on the A35 which will give approximately half an acre of grazing back to the Forest and make it easier for management of a pound at that point by cutting into the railings and putting a set of gates that can be locked open when not in use and shut for roundups. This would allow the ponies to roam freely when not in use, making it easier to catch them during a round up as they would think they could go right through.

In addition to this, slow-moving vehicles have nowhere to pull out of the way of faster traffic as required by law i.e. tractors and trailers loaded with hay and straw which would cause large disruption especially during peak tourist season. A prime example of this was a breakdown I attended yesterday where a lorry's brakes had locked on. It took 15 – 20 minutes to release the brakes on the trailer and move the lorry to the safety of a lay-by and a further 5 hours in the lay-by to repair the lorry.

Thank you for hearing my presentment. I hope this helps with the impending decision to improve the Forest for those who have an interest and concern in the Future of the Forest.'

2019/10437 ASHURST HOSPITAL

Presentment by Mr Peter Roberts – former Verderer and former resident of Ashurst

'Yesterday the National Park Authority published its Plan Amendments which includes the use of the land at Ashurst for housing. This land is the former Workhouse Site, which was taken from the Open Forest in 1836. When the grant for the land was made there was a specific reservation that in the event of the Workhouse no longer being required, it should revert to the Forest. Seven acres of the site were returned to the Forest in 1988, thanks mainly to the work of the late Verderer, David Stagg.

The remaining land is commonable land from which the common rights have never been removed. It should be returned to the Open Forest for grazing the commoners' stock. I implore you to object most strongly to the National Park Proposed Main Modifications and work towards returning this land to the rightful users.'

2019/10438 COMMERCIAL DOG WALKERS CHARTER / DOGS

Presentment by Mr Tony Hockley, Chairman, New Forest Commoners' Defence Association

Mr Hockley echoed the sentiments of the Friends of the New Forest regarding dogs. He said that other events have to be licenced and there are serious concerns about the effect dogs are having on the Forest and livestock. He said the NFCDA welcomes the Official Verderer's announcement about the need to control dogs.

2019/10439 GELDINGS ON THE FOREST

Presentment by Mr Tony Hockley, Chairman, New Forest Commoners' Defence Association

Mr Hockley welcomed last year's arrangements for depasturing stallions. He encouraged commoners to take geldings off the Forest whilst the stallions are out and he asked for the Court's support.

2019/10440 FEEDING OF PONIES BY THE PUBLIC

Presentment by Mrs Kathleen Clark, Commoner

'I have recently removed a pony of mine from the Forest because she has developed a habit of searching out people who look likely to be carrying food and chasing them. She used to be a very gentle well-behaved pony.

The pony is a very good doer (even without being fed sandwiches!). She was bred for the forest, is successful at living on the forest and it is not her fault that she has learned bad behaviour due to people feeding her (and breaking forest bye-laws).

I take the safety of the public seriously and have taken my pony home to prevent any more problems. I will now have to try to relocate this pony to a different part of the Forest, away from popular tourist areas but also away from what is her home. I plan to keep her at home with my young stallion for a while, to give her a chance to hopefully unlearn this behaviour.

I'd like to make the point that it is increasingly difficult to run stock on the forest because visitor numbers have increased so much. The public need to know that by feeding and petting the animals they are destroying the environment that they come to enjoy. I have seen people actually sitting their children on Forest ponies!

They also need to know that in instances like this, visitors are actually condemning ponies to a very uncertain future - if this pony was not of prime breeding age and a particularly good specimen, I would seriously consider having her euthanised or taking her to Beaulieu Road where, with a forest ban, she would likely be sold for meat.

I am grateful for the efforts of fellow commoners and others who spend time trying to educate visitors about these issues but feel that without a higher profile and enforcement of the existing bye-laws this problem will get much worse.'

The Head Agister closed the Court

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Bruce Rothnie, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest
Mr Paul Grugeon, Land Agent (New Forest)

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2019/10441 COMMERCIAL DOG WALKERS CHARTER & THE CONTROL OF DOGS RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor is investigating ways in which dogs can be effectively managed. The Court feels Forestry England should review its byelaws. In response the Deputy Surveyor said that FE nationally, does not believe it is necessary and in any event, the legal process for altering Forestry England byelaws is extremely lengthy.

Action
DS

The Court continues to encourage the Forestry Commission to find ways of effectively managing the public pressure which is increasing year on year, to the serious detriment of the Forest and the SSSI.

Cllr Heron said that he will write to the relevant Minister urging that Forestry England be given the necessary resources and tools to manage the increasing pressure from visitor numbers."

Action
EH

2019/10442 A35 HOLMSLEY BRIDGE REPLACEMENT DISCHARGE

The Court does not support Mr Whittle's suggestion of opening the road between Holmsley Lodge and the A35 to stock. It is very narrow and it is likely it would be a high-risk road for accidents.

As respects the laybys, the fences will be realigned and therefore areas currently occupied by the laybys will be accessible to Forest stock and will, in time, return to grazing.

The Court voted unanimously to approve the proposals, with the exception of Cllr Heron, who abstained.

2019/10443 ASHURST HOSPITAL PROPOSED RE-DEVELOPMENT DISCHARGE

A letter setting out the Court's views on the site was sent to the Inspector. It was agreed a similar letter should now be sent to NHS property services. The Court supports the proposition that surplus land should be returned to the open Forest.

Action
OV/Clerk

2019/10444 GELDINGS DISCHARGE

Some problems with geldings interfering with the work of the stallions occur every year. This is why 2 year old colts, which have passed the spring inspection, are no longer turned out. It was agreed an announcement should be made at the next Court, asking commoners to consider removing any geldings which are seen to be troublesome, from the Forest whilst the stallions are out.

Action
RD/OV

2019/10445 FEEDING OF PONIES BY THE PUBLIC DISCHARGE

Efforts to educate the public continue. Forestry England and National Park Rangers visit the hot spots and talk to the public. In addition, temporary signage is used to try to explain to the public why they should keep away from the Forest animals and certainly not feed them. The Court approved the new temporary signage that Forestry England would like to use at several sites this year.

DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS – ITEMS APPROVED AND TO BE RECORDED

2019/10446 DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS RECORDED AT THIS COURT DISCHARGE

DM0046 BT Openreach – New duct at Arrakis Commercial Enterprises, Swinesleys Farm

DM0047 Wessex Water – Burley Lawn sewer repair

DM0048 Bournemouth & SW Water – New water connection from main in Pitmore Lane to property, via gravel drive

MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COURTS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2019/10447 SSE REPLACEMENT POLES – BANK/ALUM GREEN/HOLIDAYS HILL RESUME

Natural England is not happy with part of the route and will be meeting again with SSE to consider alternatives.

Members of the Court would like to attend the meeting and the Forestry Commission was asked to ensure the Clerk is advised of the date and time.

Action
PG

The Clerk will endeavour to obtain a report prepared a couple of years ago by the New Forest Association, listing over ground electricity lines which could be put underground as and when the opportunity arises.

Action
Clerk

2019/10448 A31 CATTLE GRID AT CASTLE MALWOOD RESUME

It is understood HCC has written to Highways England expressing the view that the cattle grid is unsafe. Every effort has been made to encourage HE to comply with its obligations. Forestry England asked the Clerk to provide them with the contact details for the person she has been dealing with at HE.

Action
Clerk

2019/10449	VERDERERS' INCLOSURES	RESUME
	Discussions continue as to the best way forward. However, it was agreed that the following objectives need to be agreed.	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. It is necessary to be clear on which trees should be left to screen adjacent fenced roads.2. For works already undertaken under the HLS, agree whether they are acceptable or not. If they are, the areas can come out of the lease. If not, agree further works.3. Verderers to let FE know which areas of the Verderers' Inclosures should be restored.	
	The Deputy Surveyor undertook to respond to Mr Pasmore's email which raised a number of outstanding questions.	Action DS
2019/10450	WINDBLOWN TREES	RESUME
	A positive meeting in Penerley Wood took place recently, attended by representatives of Forestry England, Natural England and the Verderers.	
	A Crown Lands Fallen Deadwood Policy was produced in 2014. The document is due its 5 year review this year. Mr Deakin said he will go through it and make recommendations to include handling of reports of fallen trees.	Action RD
2019/10451	GOLF CLUBS & PESTICIDES	RESUME
	Mr Grugeon has written to the Golf Clubs, telling them to stop using chemicals until a policy is agreed. Meanwhile, Bramshaw Golf Club has confirmed it is pesticide free. The Court therefore approved the Plan for that Club and it can now be signed off. The Clerk will return the copies of the agreements that she still has to Mr Grugeon.	Action OV Action Clerk
	Bramshaw GC has had some fencing cut around greens and tees where fencing is permitted under the management plan. Mr Grugeon is investigating. It was suggested that the Official Verderer could make an announcement about this at the May Court.	Action PG Action OV
	There have been recent incidences of fences being cut at Holidays Hill Inclosure.	
2019/10452	BROCKENHURST CRICKET CLUB REQUEST FOR 20 YEAR LICENCE	DISCHARGE
	Mr Grugeon has been in touch with the Club but as yet does not have any further information.	
2019/10453	EAST BOLDRE VILLAGE HALL PROPOSED SHOP	DISCHARGE
	It has been ascertained that the area of land which became the school field, was initially transferred in 1842. The situation regarding any reversion is not clear and further research into the legal position is being undertaken.	Action PG

Mr Grugeon has gone back to the Village Hall Committee which has been asked to provide evidence that grazing rights on the school field were extinguished at the time of the transfer.

Once the legalities are resolved, a clear written proposal is required.

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2019/10454 REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE LIST

RESUME

An updated SSSI Repair and Maintenance List was circulated.

Cllr Heron left the meeting

ACTION LIST

2019/10455 ACTION LIST

RESUME

An updated Action List was provided. The Court asked for 3 additional items to be added:

Action DS

1. A31 to the Rufus Stone. It is suggested the laybys, which have been created by verge parking, be removed. They are frequently used for fly-tipping.
2. Powder Mill Road Junction with the B3078. This access is regularly obstructed and the verge is being degraded by parking. There are two car parks nearby.
3. Parking area opposite Nomansland Garage. This degraded area has greatly expanded over the years and is now used by dog walkers as well as the garage. It is suggested the parking area be reduced, to allow space for 4 vehicles for use by the garage, under licence. The Court was asked to approve this proposal which was agreed unanimously.

NEW ENCROACHMENTS INVOLVING THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2019/10456 ENCROACHMENTS LIST

RESUME

There are currently no outstanding encroachments.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2019/10457 PONIES DE-BARKING TREES

DISCHARGE

A report, dated March 2019, entitled 'Bark stripping by New Forest Ponies' has been produced under the HLS by Robin Gill, Mark Ferryman and Leanne Sargeant.

The Court felt this report to be a very informative and useful piece of work. It is believed the problem of ponies de-barking trees is now probably under control. There has been no new activity in Mark Ash. There were a few points in the report that the Court felt may not be entirely accurate and these will be relayed to the authors.

Action
RD

2019/10458 FAWLEY FOOTPATH UPGRADE TO BRIDLEWAY DISCHARGE

The re-designation of this footpath to a bridleway will take place as its use by horse riders is well established and sufficient for the re-designation to be considered appropriate. It was agreed that the best way of discouraging cyclists is to put up a sign saying 'no cycling'. Implementing and policing a TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) can be difficult.

MATTERS ARISING

2019/10459 INCLOSURE FENCES RESUME

Removing certain inclosure fences will leave some stock pounds useless. Forestry England wishes to remove fences where they are no longer required for timber production and to protect young trees from stock.

Mrs Westerhoff commented that there is a map which was agreed under the Forest Design Plan, showing which fences the Verderers feel should be retained. The Deputy Surveyor undertook to look at the map and appraise himself of what it says. The Court asked that discussions take place before any fences are taken down. Action DS

2019/10460 VINNEY RIDGE INCLOSURE FENCE DISCHARGE

Mr Pasmore reported that the fence is flat on the ground. It is a danger to stock. In addition, the north gate into the double fenced area has a broken catch and the fence is down. The Deputy Surveyor said he will ensure that repairs are undertaken as a matter of urgency. Action DS

2019/10461 VINNEY RIDGE INCLOSURE / BLACKWATER ARBORETUM CAR PARK DISCHARGE

A lot of money appears to have been spent 'tarting up' the inclosure with fir cone sculptures, notice boards, carving on posts, archways and the like. The Court questioned whether Forestry England has the power to do this sort of work which it is understood has been paid for by National Lottery funding. Some years ago, the Court objected to a new archway into the arboretum but there are now several such structures, plus some memorial seats and large notices.

The Deputy Surveyor and Mr Grugeon left the meeting.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

2019/10462 MEDIA TRAINING DISCHARGE

Media training has now been undertaken and it seems there is a good amount of 'on air' ability amongst members of the Court and staff.

It was agreed that when requests are made for interviews, the Official Verderer and the Clerk will decide whether the Court should take part and if so, they will pick the person to do it, depending on the subject. The suggestion that we should prepare a list of messages that we wish to get across was agreed. Action All

It will be necessary to amend some staff job specifications to enable them to take part in interviews. Action OV/Clerk

2019/10463 ENCROACHMENT AT PICKET HILL RESUME

Natural England and the National Park Authority's planning enforcement team have been asked to assist with abating the further encroachments at Picket Hill. Action Clerk

2019/10464 SPECIAL BY DESIGN DISCHARGE

The paper produced by the National Park Authority regarding signage had been circulated. The Court felt strongly that it should have an input. The Official Verderer has agreed to go to the initial meeting. The Court agreed the sum of £2,000 can be offered towards the cost of employing a consultant to assist with designing new signage. The Court felt that more emphasis needs to be placed on education and instructing the public about what they should or should not do when visiting the Forest. The role of signage is to encourage appropriate behaviours. The Official Verderer will contact Mr Matthews at the NPA. Action OV

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

2019/10465 AFTER THE HLS DISCHARGE

Natural England has advised that the Forest cannot fit within the rigid scheme rules of Countryside Stewardship. At the moment it is not known whether the current HLS will be rolled over. If not, there won't be a new scheme until 2024. It is thought that Government will make a decision at the end of May as to whether the current HLS will be rolled over. The local MPs are being asked to push actively for such a rollover.

There may be an opportunity for the Forest to take part in a Pilot ELMS (Environmental Land Management scheme).

VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME

2019/10466 VGS PAYMENTS DISCHARGE

The money has been received from the RPA and payments to commoners have been made.

MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2019/10467 RECREATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer said he is proposing to invite the Chairman of the National Park, Mr Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre and the Head of Planning at the NPA, Mr Steve Avery, to the June Court to discuss the way forward with the RMS. No objections were raised.

2019/10468 HAMPSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST MEETING DISCHARGE

Mrs Westerhoff attended a recent meeting, in which the grazing density on the Forest was discussed. Hampshire Wildlife Trust is reported to be fairly happy with the way things are at present.

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 17th April 2019 in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.

2019/10469 LITTER WORKING GROUP RESUME

Mr Dowsett reported on a recent meeting of this group. NFDC is organising a meeting to help address the problem of littering from vehicles. Mr Dowsett will attend. Action BD

FINANCIAL MATTERS

2019/10470 FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME

The Financial Statement was noted.

STAFF MATTERS / HEALTH & SAFETY

2019/10471 BEHAVIOUR OF STOCK DISCHARGE

There are constant problems with stock interacting and in some cases, conflicting with members of the public. This unwanted behaviour is being caused by people petting and hand feeding animals which sometimes makes the animals behave aggressively as they demand food. Strenuous efforts continue by all the Forest organisations to try to improve public behaviour, but it is proving to be a challenge.

2019/10472 STALLIONS 2019 DISCHARGE

Miss Macnair complained that she was not invited to the Stallion Committee meeting.

2019/10473 FEEDING OF STOCK BY THE PUBLIC RESUME

The byelaw which restricts the feeding of stock is to be considered carefully to see whether it can be used as a deterrent to members of the public who feed stock. Action OV/Clerk

2019/10474 COMMONERS' DEFENCE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING DISCHARGE

Mrs Tina Woodley, VGS Administrator, attended the recent AGM of the CDA. She distributed a large number of cattle ear tags and pony collars.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2019/10475 DEFRA VERDERER RESUME
June

The appointment of a Defra Verderer to replace Mr Mills who is retiring, is underway and the Official Verderer has been asked to sit on the selection panel along with two Defra representatives. Action OV

2019/10476 LAND & PROPERTY AT LYNDHURST ROAD (ASHURST) RAILWAY STATION RESUME

There is a rumour circulating that Network Rail may have sold or is intending to sell the house which was originally occupied by the station master. The house is currently tenanted and the tenant is not an employee of Network Rail. The Clerk was asked to investigate. Action Clerk

2019/10477 VERDERERS' LEAFLET – PRECIOUS WILDERNESS OR SUBURBAN PARK RESUME

This very useful and well written leaflet, which explains the Verderers' Policies in detail, is in need of minor updating. Members of the Court are asked to let the Clerk know, by the May Court, if they disagree with anything in the leaflet or feel anything else should be added. Some new photographs are being obtained.

Action All

2019/10478 NEW FOREST SHOW STAND RESUME
June

The New Forest Show Society has suggested changes to the Heart of the Forest in which the Verderers have their display. A large marquee containing the Verderers' display together with those of Forestry England and the National Park is proposed. This is in place of the individual marquees of previous years.

The Court accepted the change but advised the Clerk that the Verderers must be easily distinguished from the other two organisations.

An Agister's Land Rover is an important part of the display and the Show Society will be asked to relocate the Ice Cream Van which, last year, was situated directly outside the Verderers' marquee. The height of the marquee must also remain as in previous years as the Court's display has been designed for a 3m high marquee. If it is lower, much of the display will have to be redesigned at not inconsiderable expense.

The Court approved a budget of £8,000 for this year's New Forest Show with a 50% contingency should it be necessary. The Clerk assured the Court that the minimum amount possible will be spent whilst still ensuring that the Court has a well designed display.

Action Clerk

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.50 p.m.

Julianne
15 May 2019