

New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

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21 October 2010

**RECORD OF DECISIONS OF THE NEW FOREST HLS SCHEME BOARD:
MEETING IN THE LIBRARY, QUEEN'S HOUSE, LYNDHURST,
1115HRS 19 OCTOBER 2010**

Present	Initials	Appointment
Voting Members		
Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre	OCE	Official Verderer – Verderers of the New Forest (Chairman)
Claire Gingell	CG	Interim Head of Sustainable Development – New Forest National Park
Mike Seddon	MS	Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest – Forestry Commission
Non-Voting Members		
Rachel Bailey	RB	Team leader Hampshire & IOW – Natural England
Graham Ferris	GF	Chair – CDA
Chris Caswell	CC	NF HLS Scheme Programme Manager
Denise Eccles	DE	NF HLS Scheme Administrator

Apologies Received:

Alison Barnes, Chief Executive – New Forest National Park Authority

Item	Record of Decisions (RoD)	Action by
1. Minutes of Last Meeting	Approved RoD from 19 July, with an amendment to 6a which should read 'Only Partner Chief Executives or their Appointed Representative to attend future Boards.....'	
2. Financial Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An uncommitted spend of under £3k exists. • A large spend predicted for the end of the year, but largely for FC projects that are in-hand and £340k commitment to spend on Beaulieu Road. • 1st annual payment instalment received from RPA. • Draft Finance Process for Partners briefed to Board; to be checked by Auditors 22Oct before distribution. 	CC

<p>\ 2. Financial Summary cont...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The finance process is based now upon BACS Transfers to Partners that ensures transparency and avoids multiple signatories. Therefore, the Board agreed to raise the level of authorisation for payment to Partners by the HLS Scheme Programme Manager from £20,000 to £100,000 but that, in order to secure Board control over the process, either the Chairman or another Partner Board member would need to approve (not sign off) each transfer. The HLS Programme Manager remains authorised to pay all other invoices not exceeding £20,000. 	
<p>3a. 2010-11 Programme Register</p>	<p>Board approved level of Administration costs to be raised from initial estimate of 7.5% set by MoA to 9% to reflect the realities of earlier decisions by HLS Board to pay for a Programme Manager and Assistant as well as the existing VGS Manager.</p>	
<p>3b. Work In Progress</p>	<p><u>Beaulieu Road</u> – On behalf of VGS Manager, CC attended site visit of 12 Oct, with SWater, DOCWRA, NPA where it was assessed that all things considered and relevant clearances and licences in place, work could commence mid/late November, but delays to actual start date still expected. MS asked that Project Manager confirm before start of project a reinstatement plan and responsibilities.</p> <p>Confirmed Sponsor as Verderers; Project Manager confirmed by OCE as Colin Draper.</p>	<p>OCE</p>
	<p><u>Capital Works (CW)</u> – NPA confirmed works not yet started but structural engineers appointed for 3 CW projects, Aerodrome still at the survey stage and LIDAR planned and agreed. Update required at next Board.</p>	<p>NPA</p>
	<p><u>Micro chipping</u> NE (RB) advised HLS could fund <i>facilitation</i> of the scheme only, given that there is an element of legal obligation. OCE confirmed that some animals being chipped will return to the forest, but others are being sold. RB to advise with VGS Manager.</p>	<p>RB</p>
<p>4a. Proposals Seeking Approval (PCD's)</p>	<p><u>LIDAR Analyst</u> - Sponsor: NPA</p> <p>Approved – subject to caveats:</p> <p>Agreed Project Manager: Frank Green</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unease that Job Description 3.3 strays beyond HLS requirements. NE (RB) <u>stressed</u> that the analysis should <u>not</u> be archaeology focused as 	<p>CG</p>

\ 4a. cont...	<p>there are wider benefits and outputs such as wildlife and lawn data etc. NPA to have Project Manager review relevant skill set & Job Description.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The post will be subject to review at Board of January 2012. 	All
	<p><u>Commoners Census: Sponsor Verderers</u></p> <p>Approved.</p> <p>Agreed Project Manager: Colin Draper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be funded in full from the Verderers HLS allocation on behalf of the NF HLS Scheme. OCE to confirm with Verderers Management Committee. Agreed that a sponsor Partner of a Project that has overarching benefit to the whole of the NF HLS Scheme will fund the Project in full with a commensurate reduction in the overall funds available for grazing and wetland restoration. The principle reiterated by the Board that every Proposal must follow the tendering process of whichever Partner sponsors that Proposal. Initiators of a Proposal must be made fully aware that their proposal, if initially costs above the threshold where 3 estimates are required by their sponsor Partner, will go to estimate/tender process with all the implications this brings. CC to state this at the next meetings of working groups. FC and NPA have processes for tendering as per regulations from their respective government departments. Verderers to confirm to the Board their policy for tendering. Board instructed HLS Programme Manager to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. amend Working Group ToR to clearly explain the separate process of tender for each Partner. b. remind Working Groups, during the next round in December, of the need for Proposals to go through tender process of the sponsoring Partner at stage 2 c. inform those Proposal Initiators already working on Stage 2 Project Control Documents. Board agreed in principle for a 'small grants fund' to operate within the HLS scheme to simplify and speed the allocation of funds to low cost Proposals, but the Board would first monitor the level of need over the next 6 months before making an allocation. 	<p>OCE</p> <p>OCE</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>CC</p> <p>OCE</p> <p>CC</p> <p>All</p>

	<p><u>Knightwood Archaeology</u> Sponsor: NPA</p> <p>NPA agreed Project Manager to be: Frank Green</p> <p>Approved, subject to caveats:</p> <p>(i) the success of NPA to obtain an exemption to their regulations on tendering process (as the costs exceed the NPA single tender £5k limit)</p> <p>(ii) Data must be made available:</p> <p>a. in a digitised format compatible with NPA GIS System (ie so that the records of the archaeological sites identified can be transferred digitally (as polygons, polylines or points) so that they can be incorporated directly into a GIS).</p> <p>b. so that Individual features surveyed are clearly labelled and named eg a Boiling Mound.</p>	<p>CG</p> <p>CG</p>
4b. Decision Making on Proposals	<p>Agreed use of a decision making tool as a guide to assist the Board to select and prioritise Proposals /Projects for funding. HLS Programme Manager to use and present results to the Board in support of a PCD for approval. CC to issue final version of the tool to Board members, for comment by 29 October.</p>	All
	<p>Agreed an extraordinary meeting of the Board to be held in the next 3 to 6 months to decide on NF HLS Scheme strategy for 2010-20. CC to arrange.</p>	CC
4c. Register 2011-12	<p>State of Programme Register for 2011/12 noted. Draft 2011-12 Register to be ready for next Board.</p>	CC
5a. AOB: Health Check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepted outcomes of 'Health Check' report from Jim Seymour, Regional Director NE. • OCE agreed to invite Jim Seymour to attend the meeting of Verderers Management Committee planned for the 1st or 2nd week of February 2011. • CC to coordinate next HLS Health Check with Jim Seymour with this meeting date. 	<p>All</p> <p>OCE</p> <p>CC</p>
5b. AOB: Communications	<p>Agreed outline communications plan for next 6 months.</p> <p>Agreed principles for communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Press Release Template to be used by all Partners to include, Header, Editors Notes and an HLS 'strap-line'. • HLS Scheme 'strap-line' to be created by HLS Programme manager with Partners comms staff • Minimise use of leaflets but use E-comms whenever possible. 	All

<p>\ 5b. cont...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given that a Project is already approved by the Board, no Partner may publicly disagree or stop a Press Release on that Project. • Press language not to be edited unless factually incorrect. • Partners have the autonomy to initiate Press Releases on Projects they sponsor, but should make other Partners, NE and the HLS Programme Manager aware of the impending release. <p>HLS Programme Manager directed to implement the above principles and to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Manage, coordinate and control the overarching comms plan to ensure appropriate timing of releases and no duplication. (ii) Ensure current messages for the NF HLS Scheme are reflected in all communications. (iii) Monitor press coverage with assistance of FC who have the best feedback service of the Partners. 	<p>CC</p>
<p>5c. AOB: Working Groups</p>	<p>Board noted informal feedback from first Working Groups. Board agreed some adjustment and reinforcement of principles required concerning the role of Working Groups, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WGps exist to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. identify likely Proposals at Stage 1 that will meet the NE HLS criteria for the NF HLS Scheme and benefit the New Forest. b. to advise and inform the Board through the Stage 2 process, drawing upon the expertise that exists amongst the wider audience of the New Forest, of all aspects of a proposal that should be considered. • It is the Board, and the Board alone that decides on whether to approve a proposal for funding. • The Board recognised that the current voting process of Working Groups is inappropriate and inadequate for task and agreed to changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Stage 1. It is to be the decision of the Chair as to whether a Proposal goes to Stage 2. The Chair may use a vote by only the senior representative present of each Partner to decide and act upon the consensus of discussion. The decision is on whether a Proposal is likely to satisfy HLS scheme objectives and so is worthy of further work at Stage 2. (This recognises that the preparatory work required will rest predominantly with the nominated Sponsor Partner for a Proposal.) 	<p>CC</p>

	<p>b. Stage 2. Is to decide on whether a Proposal is prepared sufficiently to be ready for presentation to the next HLS Board. Similarly for Stage 2 it will be the decision of the Chair, based upon a vote by only the senior representative of each Partner, to decide on whether to present the Proposal to Board.</p> <p>c. When considering a Proposal, the Board will refer to RoDs of Working Groups and take into consideration views raised by individuals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLS Programme manager: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. to amend and reissue WGp ToRs to working group members b. to brief as Item 1 at every next working group meeting the decision of this Board meeting. 	CC
5d. Additionality	<p>Board reinforced the principle of 'additionality'; that in the VGS Agreement with NE identified activities (such as wetland restoration), that are recognised by NE as over and above the statutory requirements of Partners and so will attract HLS funding to achieve HLS outcomes. On this basis the Board agreed that such projects ie stream restoration projects go direct to Stage2 at Working Groups. HLS Programme Manager is to brief Working groups at next meeting(s) and amend the TORs as necessary.</p>	CC
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Meeting closed at 1345 hrs</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Next Meeting to be on Monday 17th January</i> <i>1030hrs.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>April meeting to be on Tuesday 12th at 1000hrs</i></p>	All

Electronically Signed

Chris Caswell
HLS Scheme Programme Manager