

New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

The Queen's House
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**RECORD OF DECISIONS OF THE NEW FOREST HLS SCHEME BOARD:
MEETING IN THE LIBRARY, QUEEN'S HOUSE, LYNDHURST,
1000HRS 12 APRIL 2011**

Present	Initials	Appointment
Voting Members		
Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre	OCE	Official Verderer – Verderers of the New Forest (Chairman)
Alison Barnes	AB	Chief Executive – New Forest National Park Authority
Kevin Penfold	MS	Interim 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
Simon Weymouth	SW	Head of Forest Planning & Environment
Chris Caswell	CC	NF HLS Scheme Programme Manager
Denise Eccles	DE	NF HLS Scheme Administrator (Minutes)

Item	Record of Decisions (RoD)	Action by
1a. Minutes of Last Meeting	Approved RoD from 17 January 2011. GF requested explanation of NE condition assessments in relation to ponds and other features. Action: RB to send him 'Features of Interest' document.	RB
1b. Health Check Findings	OCE briefed the meeting on the key points from the Natural England Health Check: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetland Restoration is the critical element of the scheme. • Other key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To develop a new payment scheme to commoners, ○ To acquire 75% of active commoners into the scheme. ○ To create a monitoring programme. RB confirmed the base line for the scheme that the NF	ALL

	HLS must demonstrate that RLR packages of land within the scheme have had action taken on them during the lifetime of the scheme, but they do not have to have reached Favourable condition within the 10 years of the scheme.	
2. Financial Summary	<p>The Board accepted the financial summary for year 2010-11 presented by CC.</p> <p>The Board discussed the possibility of applying for an increase to the £80 per hectare rate. RB advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The original rate negotiated so it would be reasonable for a new rate to be negotiated in the light of experience from one year of the scheme. • Possible rates could be £180 to £240 depending on habitat type. • The request could be for either a 'one-off' or permanent increase to Annual Payment. • A business case is required to demonstrate the added value to be gained from an increase in rate. <p>Action: The Board instructed CC to prepare a case and for RB to advise.</p>	CC and RB
3a. 2010-11 Programme Register	<p>Register showed the agreed overspend by the Verderers for to Beaulieu Road Sales yard project. In accordance with the agreement between the Partners at the HLS Board of 23 April 2010 (Item 6.1) the Verderers would receive a reduced annual payment in 2011-12 at c £660k.</p> <p>The Board reaffirmed the principle that in order for such large scale projects to be undertaken by any Partner, the remaining Partners must remain flexible in their planned spend.</p> <p>The Board agreed that cross scheme costs (ie Staff, communications) should be shared across the HLS scheme; taken to its logical conclusion this would have the effect of reducing the funds available for Grazing and Wetland Restoration which currently would be by 12%.</p>	
3b. Work In Progress – VGS Report	<p>OCE announced two items of recent agreement in principle between himself as OV and The Deputy Surveyor (Mike Seddon)</p> <p>a. That the FC has agreed in principle to find a way to make land at New Park Longmeadowfields either immediately available to the Verderers or an agreement to occupy for use for commoners' animals as the need arises. Mark Street, the Land Agent for the FC was instructed by the Deputy Surveyor (Mike Seddon) to initiate the necessary action.</p> <p>OV (OCE) has asked the Verderers Chairman of the Staff committee, Richard Deakin, to be responsible for the project for the Verderers.</p>	KP OCE

	<p>b. That the FC agrees in principle and is in full support of the necessary acquisition either by lease or other means of land and buildings for development and occupation by an Agister with land attached. An option is at Eyeworth. The intent would be to re-develop the property into 2 houses, one for an Agister and one for a commoner. Mark Street, Land Agent, has been instructed to take the necessary steps to complete this deal.</p> <p>NE Advice: RB advised that the proposal is acceptable to NE (because the prime reason for re-development is for an Agisters holding). The full cost (c£400k) could not be funded through Capital Works, but elements of it might be eligible eg: stock handling equipment, fencing.</p> <p>Action: RB to find out from NE how much of the scheme could be claimed as Capital Works.</p> <p>Action: CC to do the formal application for those CW elements and include the proposal in the business case as agreed in Item 2 above.</p> <p>Action: Beaulieu Road Sales Yard project opening ceremony arranged for 1130 hrs 11th August. The Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries, Richard Benyon MP has been invited by OCE to attend, along with Dr Julian Lewis MP. Board members were asked to attend if available.</p>	<p>KP</p> <p>RB</p> <p>CC</p> <p>ALL</p>
<p>4a. Proposals Seeking Approval (PCD's)</p>	<p><u>GeoData - to improve GIS dataset on habitats</u> Sponsor: Forestry Commission Project Manager: Jane Smith</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing data is 20+ years old • Dovetail with LIDAR work • Include stock density information <p>Approved by Board, subject to agreement between FC and NPA on who takes responsibility for future on ongoing updates and maintenance. Monitoring Group of 18 May to consider options and report back before the next Board meeting.</p> <p>Action: SW to take forward, discuss with NPA and to present options to Monitoring Group.</p>	<p>SW</p>
	<p><u>Bracken Management</u> Sponsor: Forestry Commission Project Manager: Dave Morris</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both NE (RB) and CDA reaffirmed how critical it is for bracken to be controlled. • Additionality requires more proof. PCD requires amendment to show the additional hectareage that could be achieved through this funding, compared to the average achieved solely by FC in the past. 	

	<p>Action: SW to amend PCD for circulation out of committee to the Board Partners, but in order not to delay the programme and miss the potential weather window of 2011 , this PCD is Approved by Board, subject to above.</p>	<p>SW</p>
<p>5a. AOB: Chair</p>	<p>A previous suggestion that the position of Chair would be rotated between Partners on a 2 year cycle was affirmed by the Board. Therefore OCE's replacement will take on the role of Chair for the remainder of the second year for The Verderers representative to Chair. A new Chair will be chosen for April 2012 from between FC and NPA representatives.</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>5b. AOB: Spend Strategy</p>	<p>Strategy document issued by CC previously, general comments offered were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust the tone, style and content for a wider readership; expand on the Critical Success Activities. • Include Annex 1 from the MoA into the text. • Give more prominence to 4 priorities set by N.E. and the delivery of these. • Give a definition of a Legacy project, what might the scheme be looking to achieve. • Re-visit Annex B - the 'Lego' diagram - to show shared costs across the partners. <p>Action: CC to circulate amended Version(s) to Board members for comment, with the intent to have the Strategy signed off by the next Board Meeting on 19 Jul.</p>	<p>CC</p>
<p>5c. AOB: Works Supervisor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Surveyor sought Board approval for HLS to fund a Works Supervisor to focus on the delivery and management of HLS contracts, a key part of which would be stream restoration. A paper was provided to the Board explaining why as a critical success factor this should come direct to the Board and not go through the usual PCD process and gave options. • The Board noted and agreed that the wetland restoration programme had tripled in size in three years and outstripped staff capacity and diverting staff from the key work of consultation, communication, design and planning. • It was also noted that as this post is funded by HLS it could be tasked with support to other HLS projects. <p>Approved by Board FC to recruit on a 3 year renewable contract a Works Supervisor to a total cost ceiling of £30,000pa.</p>	<p>SW</p>
<p>5d. AOB: Community Engagement</p>	<p>Chief Executive of NPA made the case for HLS monies to be spent with Communities (via Parish Councils) for small projects that would directly benefit local people. A PCD was initiated through Wkg Gp 2 in March;</p>	

	<p>meanwhile CC, at the request of the 17 Jan Board, had produced a short paper to set out options. The profile and strategic nature of this request prompted the Board to advance consideration of this proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board noted that of the 19 parishes of the Crown Lands, only 14 are of sufficient size to warrant immediate attention. Some concerns about projects on land just outside the scheme area, but generally felt benefits would outweigh such concerns. • RB suggested an approach similar to 'Access to Nature' scheme run by N.E., whereby a list of suitable projects is made available to PC's, backed up by briefings and support from HLS Scheme Manager. • Good PR and of public benefit. <p>Approved by Board, that the Programme Manager should test the need by visiting a selection of PCs on Crown Lands during 2011-12, to present on HLS and to trawl for ideas for HLS projects from these PCs. Initially a sum up to £20,000 would be set aside to fund eligible HLS projects from PCs. If the Trial identifies a need for such a commitment then over the following 4 years the remainder of those PCs on Crown Lands would be visited and invited to propose HLS projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCs chosen for Trial in 2011-12 to represent different areas of the Crown Lands: Denny Lodge; Godshill and Brockenhurst. Others to be considered would be Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley and Minstead. • Report and review Trial at end of one year to identify PC need(s). • Agree a 'recipe list' of projects and test idea. <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No requirement for further action on PCD. ▪ CC to take Trial forward, to consult with Verderer Clive Maton with a view to possibly first visit Denny Lodge PC. ▪ Afternote: report on trial to HLS Board meeting of July 2012. 	CC
<p>5e. AOB: NPA WW2 Project</p>	<p>Chief Executive of NPA sought agreement by the Board for a strategic spend by HLS of £70,000 towards match-funding with HLF for a WW2 Project in the New Forest. This spend meets the HLS objective for the historic environment. A paper with costings was considered.</p> <p>Approved by Board, subject to there being a clear demonstration to the Board by NPA of what will be achieved on Crown Lands by the £70k.</p> <p>Outstanding Action: The actual year for funding was not agreed, but would be either 2012/13 or 2013/14 subject to the pressure of other works and the overall spend on Historic Environment projects.</p>	CC

<p>5f. AOB: Programme Register 2011/12</p>	<p>Register now full for 2011-12, showing spend by Partners as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verderers £613k • FC £891k • NPA £80k • c£5k planned overspend. <p>Action: The community engagement trial will add another £20,000 to the planned overspend.</p>	<p>CC</p>
<p>5g. AOB: Programme Register 2012/13</p>	<p>Register was approved in principle, but Board recognised that the list will change (for example FC will withdraw smaller projects sponsored by the FC if there is no increase in funding). Specific comments at this stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year-on-year profile of wetland restoration is required from FC. • Small projects already approved and those at Stage 2 must be prioritised against each other. • Agisters Salary uplift, not clear on the year it takes effect, OCE to clarify. • Agisters housing should read £400k. • As it stands, the register shows that it may be possible to fund the WW2 project in the year 2012/13. 	<p>SW ALL OCE CC CC</p>
<p>5h. AOB: Communications</p>	<p>CC presented the media plan for 2011 and updated the Board on progress with films. Specific comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GF requested to be fully involved in any press releases regarding the Commoners Census. • GF asked to be given final approval on copy about Car Free Ditching that would be use both on website and as a Handout, planned to be first issued at the NF Consultative Panel of 12 May. • RB requested an addition to the plan for 1 Oct 2011 – the signing of the new MoA for LAS. <p>CC advised that the HLS website is now live with an address of: www.hlsnewforest.org.uk</p> <p>OCE will announce this at the Court of 20 April 2011.</p> <p>Diary date: August 11th 11:30am, Beaulieu Road opening ceremony.</p>	<p>CC and GF CC CC OCE ALL</p>
<p>5i. AOB: N.E. Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RB is confirmed in post, with responsibility for Land Management team for all of Hampshire and IoW. • NE is organised now functionally as oppose to regionally. • A new structure chart is available. <p>Action: CC to circulate to Board members.</p>	<p>CC</p>
<p>AOB: Millersford land</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SW raised the issue of an area of land (Millersford) that is owned by NT, but managed by FC. • It is not in the NT HLS scheme as they have no 	

	<p>resource to manage it, so FC would like to pursue having the land in the NF HLS scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An option suggested by RB, the land could be added to NT scheme, and by Capital Works payment the NT sub-contract FC to carry out the restoration work. <p>Action: SW and RB to identify a way forward with NT.</p>	SW and RB
AOB: Thank You	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RB thanked OCE for his contribution to the scheme, the Board and for working closely with NE. • In turn, OCE thanked CC for his work to set up the NF HLS scheme and to run it so smoothly. 	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Meeting closed at 1310 hrs</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Next Meeting Tuesday 19th July 1000hrs</i></p>	ALL

Electronically Signed

Chris Caswell
HLS Scheme Programme Manager