

New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

The Queen's House
Lyndhurst
Hampshire
SO43 7NH

023 8028 6821/6874
Fax: 023 8028 3929
chris.caswell@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

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**RECORD OF DECISIONS OF THE NEW FOREST HLS SCHEME BOARD:
MEETING IN THE LIBRARY, QUEEN'S HOUSE, LYNDHURST,
1410 HRS 19 JULY 2011**

Present	Initials	Appointment
Voting Members		
Dominic May	OV	Official Verderer – Verderers of the New Forest (Chairman)
Alison Barnes	AB	Chief Executive – New Forest National Park Authority
Kevin Penfold	KP	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
Chris Caswell	CC	NF HLS Scheme Programme Manager
Denise Eccles	DE	NF HLS Scheme Administrator (Minutes)

Item	Record of Decisions (RoD)	Action by
1a. RoD from Previous Meeting - matters arising	<p>RoD from previous board meeting 12th April 2011 were not given to the board members, so were not discussed and are not agreed. The chairman will convene an interim board meeting in due course to discuss and agree the April RoD.</p> <p>AB confirmed that HLS funding of WW2 project will be spent only on aspects concerning Crown Lands.</p> <p><u>Matters Arising:</u> Agister Housing: HLS Agreement is clear on the amount to be spent on wetland restoration, so any other big spend items require a comprehensive rationale eg: Agisters Housing. CC to ask Working Group 1 (VGS Advisory Group) for a report for the next Board meeting of 27 October on how best to develop a workable plan for the Agisters Housing. Note that Agister Housing cannot be paid out of Capital Works or Special Project, only from Annual Payment. With the current spend commitments, it looks unlikely that there will sufficient funding in the short term.</p>	<p>OV</p> <p>AB</p> <p>CC</p>

1a\ cont.	<p>Additional Land for HLS Scheme: Agreed that in the bid to NE for additional land to be considered as part of NF HLS scheme, the following parcels of land should be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Millersford ▪ Land associated with Agister's Holding <p>Scheme Audit: OV will review whether there is a need for a financial audit of NF HLS scheme.</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>OV</p>
1b. Scheme Back-ground	<p>RB gave a presentation on the scheme formation and an explanation of the 5 NE funding streams. RB informed the Board:</p> <p>(i) Annual payment: Legal costs against encroachment can be claimed from Annual Payment. OV to establish Home Farm Bartley costs. A list of people encroaching to be issued to LAS. CC to collect from Verderers.</p> <p>(ii) Capital Items: Specified in HLS handbook, scheme manager to identify all Capital Items (e.g. fencing, bracken control) and claim where possible. RB stated that bids cannot be made until Feb 2013.</p> <p>(iii) Special Projects: Bids go before a national panel. Projects such as LiDAR are considered. RB to provide criteria under which special projects are considered.</p> <p>(iv) Historic Buildings: Bids go before a national panel. RB to send scheme rules to claim from Historic Buildings 'pot' to CC.</p> <p>(v) Education and Access: Fresh funding up to £450k is available for Hants/IOW HLS Education and Access related projects (c £75k could be available for NF HLS). RB to send rules to CC.</p> <p>CC to convene Working Group 3 as soon as possible for ideas (eg cycle route markers could get this funding).</p> <p>5Aug Verderers training day could possibly be funded from this pot – RB to discuss eligibility with AB.</p> <p>NF HLS has plan to bid for max claim by NPA and NF Centre for 50 Education visits for 2011/12.</p>	<p>OV</p> <p>CC</p> <p>CC</p> <p>RB</p> <p>RB</p> <p>RB</p> <p>CC</p> <p>RB/AB</p>
1c. N.E. Update	<p>RB explained the hierarchy of the Land Management function. The new Health Check 'Inspector' is Andy McDonald to whom RB reports. Board agreed to RB's request that Andy be invited to attend the October 27th meeting to observe and meet Board.</p>	<p>RB and CC</p>
Agenda Items discussed with RB before RB left meeting	<p>Item 2, Staff Costs – RB confirmed the staff costs ceiling is 12% as per Health Check of 8 Feb 11. OV intends to draft a letter for agreement by NE to distinguish correctly between administration staff & costs, and those staff who are managing projects and/or physical restoration of unfavourable habitats and landscape.</p> <p>Item 4a. The idea was supported by NE with suggestion from RB that could be done by PhD student.</p> <p>Item 4b. The idea was strongly supported by RB as, within NE and on the national scene, this is a current 'hot' topic. Need to consider options for carrying out the work.</p> <p>Item 5. Option 2 favoured by NE.</p> <p>Item 6. RB reaffirmed that the Register gives NE the important</p>	<p>OV</p>

	<p>information they need of what is spent each year against the key deliverables. Amount of restored hectares/per annum is also an important outcome to be recorded.</p> <p>RB stated that NE will allow up to 20% of Annual Payment can be carried forward providing it is clearly committed to spend.</p> <p>Item 7. Map of RLR parcels required to indicate condition.</p>	CC
2. Financial Summary	<p>CC presented current and future spend profile. OV's understanding from the Court and previous Official Verderer and from the HLS Partnership Agreement is that the Verderers HLS proportion of £40 per hectare is non-negotiable. OV's understanding is that VGS will not contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetland monitoring costs. • HLS administrative staff costs – Colin Draper to do all HLS-related VGS administration. <p>In this context, OV questioned the Board agreement of 12 April that cross scheme costs (i.e. Staff, communications, monitoring) should be shared between the Partners. OV would consult with the previous OV before he advises the Board on how funds should be allocated for the 2012-13 and subsequent years.</p> <p>Works Supervisor to be included within wetland project £750k p.a.. CC to amend Register.</p> <p>KP raised the need for the scheme to make provision for any incurred redundancy liability. It was agreed that the HLS scheme is not liable for redundancy for service before employment funded by the HLS. Redundancy liability for service before the employment was funded by the HLS will be the responsibility of the employing partner, unless agreed by the board.</p>	OV CC KP, AB, OV
3a. Programme Register 2010-11	<p>Programme Register under/overspend to be shown as a % of scheme income, alongside the actual amount.</p>	CC
4a and 4b. Proposals Seeking Approval (PCD's)	<p>4a Measurement of Wetland Restoration and 4b Effects of Burning & Cutting:</p> <p>Board accepted the need for both monitoring projects, but did not approve the PCDs because their estimated costs need to be explained as seem high. CC to inform project manager.</p>	CC
5. A31	<p>Due consideration of this proposal was given by the Board. As HLS funds are fully committed for several years to come and there are no other funds immediately available, the Board agreed to halt any further work and will not appoint a Consultant. AB noted this is not wasted work, for the information would be used in future dealings with other agencies e.g.: Highways Agency. AB to instruct NPA staff. CC to advise Working Group 2.</p>	AB CC
6. Spend Strategy	<p>The Board gave instruction on a rewrite to a max of 4 pages, detail-light, to inform a broad audience and to cover the full period of the scheme (10 years). CC to circulate a draft before next Board.</p>	CC

<p>7. Programme Register 2012/13</p>	<p>The programme will be re-worked once the allocations of costs are agreed.</p> <p>Bird Surveys: Estimated costs seem too high. Working Group 2 to suggest options with much lower costs (e.g. use of volunteers).</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>CC</p>
<p>8. Working Groups</p>	<p>Board decided that with the number of good and wide-ranging projects lined up, for the time being no further projects are required unless specifically requested by the Board.</p> <p>The remit of the Working Groups is to change. In future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will allocate specific tasks to the working groups to work up into proposals for the Board to consider. This process to be managed by CC to ensure working group outcomes meet the requirement of the scheme and board direction. • Frequency of meetings is to be reduced in favour of 'ad hoc' meetings, convened for specific tasks allocated by the Board. • CC to communicate this change to working groups. <p>Board's First Task List: Working Group 2 – the survey of the 189 RLR parcels to decide what restoration action if any is required in each parcel. Working Group 3 – scope and prepare proposals to bid for some of the additional NE funds now available in the Hants and IoW HLS Education and Access budget.</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>CC</p> <p>CC</p>
<p>9. GIS</p>	<p>AB agreed for FC to lead on GIS project, subject to the sharing of data between FC & NPA. AB will ask NPA staff to produce a data sharing agreement.</p>	<p>KP</p> <p>AB</p>
<p>10. Archaeology</p>	<p>Board agreed for the delivery of HLS-related archaeology surveys to be managed by NPA archaeologist by Frank Green (the NPA is the HLS Historic Environment lead agency), working through the LiDAR analyst and volunteer organisations. AB will ask Frank Green at NPA for a short paper on how this arrangement will work in practice.</p> <p>All NPA archaeology reports to be copied to NFHAG for checking before approval.</p>	<p>AB</p> <p>AB</p>
<p>11. Wetland Restoration Consultation Process</p>	<p>The Board agreed that the New Forest Consultative Panel could be used for consultation on HLS scheme plans.</p> <p>Using the draft 'Protocol for Consultation' (commented upon by NE and FC) and distributed to the Board, OV asked AB to advise on what solution AB would recommend and to include proposals for consulting with Parish Councils (e.g. through the Quadrant meetings). The outline timeframe is to implement this process at the next Consultative Panel on 1 September 2011.</p>	<p>AB</p> <p>CC</p>

12. Car-Free Ditching	Contract is out for tender and due to be let early September. OV suggested the original specification from the late 1960s may be a cheaper option and may form the correct profile in the passage of time. KP to ask older and retired FC staff how car-free ditches were created in late 1960s.	KP
13. PhD Student	The Board agreed to jointly sponsor with the NPA, a PhD student for three years, splitting the cost 50/50 with the NPA. The annual cost to HLS will be £7,000/2 = £3,500. AB to introduce Adrian Newton of Bournemouth University to the Board to agree research projects which would contribute to the monitoring requirements of the HLS.	AB
14. Communications	In the current financial climate and on the basis that the HLS scheme needs to spend money on delivery not publicity, the Board agreed to reduce press releases to a bare minimum and to use the OV to make announcements at Verderers' Court.	
15. Beaulieu Road Event	OV will review hosting plan for the Beaulieu Rd opening day schedule, 11 August 2011.	OV
16. AOB	<p>16.1 National Trust Agreement: The Board's view was that the Verderers' Grazing Scheme approach to the National Trust commons in relation to a grazing levy on the NT HLS Scheme was reasonable, to be consistent with agreement already made with other New Forest HLS schemes to contribute to the VGS payments made to commoners for their animals grazing commons not in Crown ownership. The proposal is to levy the NT HLS scheme £28 per ha, but will not levy £28 per ha for the overgrazed commons.</p> <p>16.2 Future Board meetings. Date to be at least a week apart from Verderers' Court days. The first part of the meeting will be either to visit HLS projects and sites or receive presentations (e.g. LIDAR) followed by the formal business meeting.</p> <p>The Board accepted RB proposal for Andrew McDonald, RB's NE manager, to attend the next meeting for familiarisation as Mr McDonald will be conducting the February 2012 Health Check. AB will investigate whether Ian Fugler, Director of Land Management NE, would also be available to join the Board for the day which will include a site visit in the morning. CC to arrange suitable sites to visit.</p>	<p>OV</p> <p>RB</p> <p>AB</p> <p>CC</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Meeting closed at 1915 hrs Next Meeting Thursday 27th October 08.30hrs CC to advise RB and GF of date change</p>	CC

Electronically Signed
Chris Caswell
HLS Scheme Programme Manager