



Official Verderer
Dominic May

14 August 2012

MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1 AUGUST 2012

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	Acting Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest – Forestry Commission
Non-Voting Members		
Rachel Bailey	RB	Team leader Hampshire & IOW – Natural England
Graham Ferris	GF	Chairman – CDA
In Attendance		
Colin Draper	CD	VGS Manager taking minutes

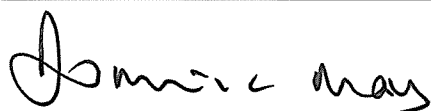
Item	Discussion	Action
1. Apologies	None.	
2. Declarations of Interest	OV is a commoner & a member of the VGS & Chairman of the VGS Management Committee. RB & GF are commoners & members of the VGS.	RESUME
3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the last meeting	<p>The minutes of the last meeting were approved by e-mail circulation so they could be distributed to all relevant parties for Action. They are posted on the HLS website.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <p>Item 1. Baseline Survey There was discussion over the revised percentage Scot's pine allowed which is a non-native species in the New Forest. JS is still apparently working to the original Indicators of Success (IOS). It was agreed that RB would check that the RPA will accept the changes, and report back. In the meantime, CD has alerted JS to the revised standards. KP informed the Board that there were areas under Forest Design Plan options that may be incompatible with the HLS options during the agreement. RB, JS & JT will have a meeting to discuss how this can be best resolved, either through prescription changes or option boundary changes.</p> <p>Item 4. Removal of Redundant Sign Posts Work on this project could be taken forward by the NPA's Signage Working Group in consultation with FC.</p> <p>Information Leaflet An outline draft provided by AB ahead of the meeting was considered. The lead is Sarah Kelly (SK) at the NPA. The leaflet needs further expansion to warn householders about the need to avoid encroaching onto the Forest and their responsibilities</p>	<p>DISCHARGE</p> <p>RB</p> <p>RB, JS, JT</p>

	<p>for fencing etc. It will be illustrated with photographs and it was suggested that these should include photographs of encroachments such as Home Farm at Bartley. Graham Wilson may be able to provide additional examples. Input to SK. SK to investigate options for distribution including delegating to local Parish Councils/use of FC/NPA Rangers. KP offered to see whether the FC had a copy of the old 'welcome packs'. Funding of £5,000 was approved.</p>	<p>AB GW & SK KP</p>
<p>4 & 5. Latchmore Wetland Restoration; & Lessons Learned</p>	<p>OV welcomed the high standard of presentments at the Verderers' Court, both for and against the Latchmore Wetland Restoration. After detailed consideration the Court agreed to continue its support.</p> <p>Delays due to wet weather on other projects over the last few months, and wet ground conditions at the restoration site itself, mean that it is necessary to postpone Latchmore work until next year.</p> <p>As a result of the Latchmore delay, there will be an HLS Wetland Restoration underspend this year. RB confirmed that she will support the case for the money to be carried over for use in future years.</p> <p>Board members had received letters from a firm of solicitors acting for the 'Friends of Latchmore'. One of the points raised is whether planning consent from the local authority is required. Legal advice is not definitive whether this project is a permitted development. Because of the controversy over the Latchmore Wetland Restoration, the board decided to use the time afforded by the weather-induced delay to apply for planning consent for this project only.</p> <p>Lessons Learned:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a need for a structured and standard way to collate all the information/evidence for each restoration site. KP confirmed that the FC already has a process in place for operational site assessments. 2. Priority is to be given to rectifying problems affecting earlier projects. It was agreed that the FC will produce a list of sites together with a register of outstanding issues. OV asked for this to be brought forward as a routine agenda item to meetings of the Verderers' Court in the same way as the encroachment list. KP asked members to forward any issues to Sarah Oakley (SO). It was agreed that the long term effects and recovery of restoration projects should be monitored and recorded, to inform future work. RB and SO to submit a formal proposal for a long term monitoring programme for consideration at the next Board meeting. 3. Coordination is required between HLS projects and restoration work in the inclosures, with a preference for streams to be progressively restored, starting at the top of the catchments. 	<p>RESUME</p> <p>Jane Smith (JS)</p> <p>KP</p> <p>RB/SO</p>
<p>6. 2012/13 Programme Register</p>	<p>Grazing Payments (line 5): OV drew attention to a possible increase in Grazing Payments. The rate paid to commoners per livestock unit may be increased slightly by the VGS Management Committee. This would have the effect of helping to compensate those commoners who had previously reduced the number of animals they turn out in response to requests under the old Countryside Stewardship Scheme to reduce grazing pressure.</p> <p>Reflective Collars (line 9): The budget will increase to include the additional cost of reflective collars for cattle. A trial is underway to identify a suitable design and a revised figure will be included when the costs are known.</p> <p>Bloodline Scheme (line12): The purpose is to mitigate the effect of the reduced number of stallions which have been turned out in recent years. This has reduced the bloodline gene pool, threatening the future of the Forest herd. The Bloodline Scheme is progressing successfully this year, with 7 colt foals born, all of different bloodlines to existing stallions.</p>	<p>RESUME</p>

	<p>New Forest Pony Publicity Group & New Forest Livestock Society (lines 13 & 14): Funding is intended to raise the profile of the New Forest pony, and increase demand and sales. It was felt that there is a lack of coordination between the various New Forest pony organisations, which is unfortunate. The VGS Manager will attempt to liaise with the New Forest Pony Enthusiasts Group to see whether or not they can usefully contribute to these aims.</p> <p>AB mentioned that the PPG has approached the NPA for assistance with producing a publicity leaflet/report. Funding for this is included in the money provided for the PPG but they require technical assistance with production. It was agreed that CD will liaise with the PPG and Kathryn Boler and Hilary Makin at the NPA over this.</p> <p>New Forest Trust (line 15): The budget is for maintenance of the Sale Yard at Beaulieu Road, as the NFT holds the lease from the FC. Members were reminded that £45k has been contributed by house and hotel owners at Beaulieu Road towards the cost of the water main, with a further £9k due when legal issues affecting the remaining 3 houses have been resolved. It had originally been suggested that this should be paid as a grant to the Trust, but it is felt that an annual maintenance payment, over the remaining lifetime of the HLS, is a more appropriate way to manage these funds.</p> <p>Pony Welfare Programme (line 16): This is a new programme which will pay commoners to remove older ponies, aged 18 and over, from the Forest. Ponies over this age no longer breed and tend to suffer from welfare problems and cause additional work for the Agisters. The programme will create additional space for younger fitter stock.</p> <p>Species Monitoring (line 24): KP passed members an update.</p> <p>Bracken Survey (line 26): The initial reports from separate Baseline Survey have emphasised the importance of tackling the bracken problem.</p> <p>Rhododendron Control: £15,950 was approved for the control of Rhododendron in the North Walk. OV expressed his thanks to Lisa Macher, the North Walk Forester, for this excellent, proactive proposal and invited the FC to submit a similar project for the South Walk.</p>	<p>CD</p> <p>CD</p> <p>KP</p>
7. 2013/14 Programme Register	<p>Nightjar Survey (line 21): The funding requirements for this have not yet been costed.</p> <p>Archaeology pre-2104 Works (line 40): A query was raised why this is shown separately in the 2013/14 programme. It was explained that these costs are included in the individual project costs in the 2012/13 Programme, but will be shown separately from now on.</p>	RESUME
8. Staffing	<p>KP explained the departure of AA who has left to take up a permanent appointment at Alice Holt. Grace Herve (GH) will assume some of her responsibilities and will liaise with CD over production of the Programme Register.</p> <p>In discussion over staff costs and the limits on this in the HLS agreement, RB explained that the limit does not extend to the costs involved in delivering programmes. KP proposed that a percentage should be available for administration to avoid the need to identify the staff costs for each project. It was agreed that KP/AB would prepare a detailed proposal for consideration out of committee.</p>	<p>RESUME</p> <p>KP/AB</p>
9. VGS	<p>AB mentioned the possibility of doing work to identify the 'economic footprint' of commoning which extends beyond the Forest and the New Forest National Park, with commoners relying on 'back up' land in neighbouring areas. It is important that other authorities provide similar levels of protection to that provided by the National Park Authority for land used by commoners for 'back up' grazing. OV explained that it would not be possible to share information</p>	RESUME

	provided by VGS members on the location of back up grazing, as this has been provided in confidence.	
10. Capital Works by FC	OV wished to upgrade to using to hard wood instead of soft wood for drift fencing, gates & pounds. KP noted that the FC has now changed to using chestnut posts, which are more durable. CD to ensure that Bratley Pound is rebuilt using hardwood.	RESUME CD
11. Historical Archaeological (HAP) & Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM)	<p>A revised figure of £4,320 is the cost of removing dangerous sections of the Longbottom Target.</p> <p>It was agreed that no further action should be taken over the Murray & Carter stones. RB agreed to remove this from the Scheme.</p> <p>It was decided to check the view of the Verderers' Court on the use of netting for protection of SAMs. (Afternote. The Verderers' Court considered this at their meeting in October 2010 and refused to allow the use of netting (minute 2010/5178) as it is considered a danger to stock.</p> <p>There continue to be concerns over consultation with relevant bodies and sharing of information on archaeological sites. OV expressed frustration at the lack of progress on capital works projects which are still outstanding from 2010. In response AB explained that there is now a clear programme for delivery.</p> <p>NPA archaeology department is overstretched and needs additional resources to provide the HLS with the service the Board expects. AB will propose a budget for additional archaeological resources.</p>	RESUME MS AB
12. LIDAR	LIDAR analysis is continuing.	RESUME
13. Baseline Survey	JS to be asked to provide feedback on critical issues by RLR parcel, as these are identified.	RESUME JS
14. Bird Survey	It is hoped that the costs of the nightjar survey will be available for the next HLS board meeting.	RESUME IB
15. Non Native Plants Project	The Board agreed 2012/13 funding of £19,756, an increase from the original budget of £16,717.	RESUME
16. Bracken Survey	<p>It was acknowledged that addressing the problem of bracken on the Forest is a complex issue, highlighted by Jonathan Cox's interim report which identifies 11 different bracken types. The spread of bracken is a major concern and there seems to be even more this year. It was requested that JC should include recommendations for control in his report.</p> <p>RB asked for the digitised work on aerial photos to be incorporated in GIS (see Item 19). It would be beneficial to have a GIS layer for habitat NVC classification; RB queried whether or not that is possible.</p>	RESUME JC JC/GH JS
17. Cutting and Burning Study	The board complimented the work of volunteers involved in the Study.	RESUME
18. Measurement of Wetland Restoration	PhD student Alexander Lovegrove is planning decomposition experiments in due course. It was requested that he notify the Verderers in case consent of the Court is required.	RESUME AL
19. Open Forest GIS	The work to populate data for GIS was held up last year by the delay in completing the LIDAR survey, and is now continuing. KP explained that this would provide the basis for production of an 'Open Forest' design plan, which would be similar to the inclosure plan.	RESUME
20. Archaeology for Wetland	The accuracy of Wetland Restoration archaeology reports was discussed. There are concerns that these are incomplete or inaccurate, due in part to the	RESUME

Restorations	<p>use of outside contractors without intimate local knowledge. This is leading to friction with the New Forest History and Archaeology Group (NFHAG). It was noted that sites are often open to different interpretations. The refusal of NFHAG to share information, other than the location of sites, contributes to the difficulty in resolving this issue.</p> <p>It was agreed a protocol for archaeological surveys be considered at the next Board meeting. OV asked for this to include the use of local knowledge and expertise.</p>	KP
21. AOB	<p>OV informed members that he has applied to Natural England for a Cattle Grazing Supplement (HR1). It was agreed that CD and RB would liaise over the production of a short paper for consideration at the next meeting.</p> <p>AB asked how the Access Forum could submit a Capital Works proposal. OV confirmed that the HLS does not have sufficient staff to help, but that the Access Forum could do the administration themselves. It was suggested that they use the successful template which was used for earlier capital works projects such as the 'eyesore' removal of concrete posts on the old railway.</p> <p>AB drew attention to 3 existing reports into 'trees of landscape importance' which could inform the proposed 'Open Forest Design Plan' (Agenda Item 19). These reports are also relevant in the ongoing debate over Scot's Pine, because landscape trees are not considered "non-native".</p> <p>RB advised the board that she has asked for the HLS's next half yearly payment to be released.</p> <p>RB informed the meeting that she will be hosting a visit on 25 – 27 September by her counterparts in Natural England, from all over the country, and said that Board members would be welcome to join them for dinner on 25 or 26 September (details to be forwarded separately). She also asked if the Head Agister could be made available to give a talk on the work of the Agisters and to accompany a site visit, which OV agreed, subject to availability.</p> <p>KP confirmed that this would be his last HLS Board Meeting. OV thanked him on behalf of the HLS Board for his contribution to work over the last 12 months, particularly helping to focus on the requirements of the HLS Agreement.</p>	<p>CD/RB</p> <p>AB</p> <p>RB CD to inform Head Agister</p>
	<p>The meeting concluded at 1.13 p.m.</p> <p>The next meeting is scheduled to be held on 3 October</p> <p>Future meetings are scheduled for: 5 December 2012 30 January 2013</p>	



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