



Verderers of the New Forest
 THE QUEEN'S HOUSE
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Official Verderer
 Dominic May

1st October 2014

MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 1st October 2014

Voting Members		
Dominic May	OV	Official Verderer – Verderers of the New Forest (Chairman)
Alison Barnes	AB	Chief Executive – New Forest National Park Authority
Jane Smith	JS	Head of Planning & Environment - Forestry Commission standing in for Mike Seddon, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest
Non-Voting Members		
Jenny Thomas	JT	Lead Adviser New Forest - Natural England (NE)
Graham Ferris	GF	Chairman – CDA
In Attendance		
Leanne Sargeant	LS	VGS Administrator taking minutes

Item	Discussion	Action
1. Apologies for absence	Mike Seddon, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest	RESUME
2. Declarations of Interest	OV is a commoner & a member of the VGS; & is Chairman of the VGS Management Committee. OV declared an interest in that he knows Rupert Williams of RT Contractors. GF is a commoner & a member of the VGS. AB declared an interest in all Wetland Restoration projects because of the NPA's responsibilities as local planning authority.	RESUME
3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the last meeting	AP2 Payment for 2013/14 has still not been paid, giving the HLS cash flow issues. The reason for the delay is that the RPA had done another re-mapping exercise and this stopped the payment. The money should be paid shortly. JT to check the December AP1 payment for 2014 is on schedule. Defra have confirmed that Dual Use will be allowed for 2015. JT to speak with the NE Commons Unit to see if they have any more news on Dual Use.	RESUME JT JT
4. 2014 Programme Register	OV wants a copy of the 2015 Programme Register to review ready for start of new year. Amendments for the 2014 programme register: Line 11 – futurity scheme – LS to arrange payment.	RESUME LS LS

	<p>Line 91 – miscellaneous – the costs for audit, HLS film, golf tees and mapping all need to be moved down to the HLS Overheads Other category, and be individually listed.</p> <p>Cattle crush painting needs to be reimbursed to the HLS by the Verderers; HLS can't pay for maintenance.</p> <p>Line 20 – needs to say 'HLS Secretarial Support from Verderers'.</p> <p>Remove column 'Balance', move 'Revised Forecast' column to the front of 'Actual spend'.</p> <p>Monitoring works are out to tender now.</p> <p>Line 65 – Notes column needs text wrapping.</p> <p>Line 74 – add 'Concrete post removal' to description text.</p> <p>Line 72 – change description to read 'Rubble clearance landscape project'.</p>	<p>LS LS</p> <p>LS</p> <p>LS LS LS</p>
<p>5. FC Update</p>	<p>Request for funds to pay for staff training was not approved.</p> <p>Queen's Meadow track has been modelled by consultants and the conclusion is that the best option is to take the track down to its original level. This will reduce the build up of water, which will reduce erosion. The recommendation is also to apply a hard surface for the track, such as tarmac with gravel in it. JT, OV and GF all opposed this. JT and OV felt that the best option was remove the hoggin down to the old track level and see if that remains stable first. The bridge will have to be ramped and should not be re-modelled yet. This will maintain recreational access. The Board approved that the track level be reduced to the old level and did not approve a hard surface to the track.</p> <p>GF asked what are the parameters for success of a wetland restoration. JT is drawing up parameters based on condition assessment methodology.</p> <p>Bracken control work is being done in-house by the FC and some by a contractor, RT Contractors. JS to check if the contractor is using the bracken harvester bought with HLS funding.</p> <p>Coppicing/Pollarding is still part of the aim of the HLS. The FC are looking for any suitable areas. OV warned that coppicing is difficult on the open forest due to grazing animals and that pollarding should be done very carefully to avoid killing any trees. JT replied that these are not an essential part of the delivery of HLS and therefore we will not be seen to have failed if none is delivered. The intention would be to create new pollards, not manage veteran pollards.</p> <p>The dragon's teeth at East Boldre are listed for renewal under the HLS. JS needs to liaise with FC Estates staff who may be carrying out a consultation with local residents and parish council about the parking at East Boldre, so that everything can be done at the same time.</p> <p>The monitoring lists Honey Buzzard as one of the species to be surveyed this year. This species was not on the original HLS species list, but it is listed on the SSSI citation, so it would be good to know the extent of the species.</p> <p>Harvestslade Bottom is going before the planning committee on 21st October. The planning applications require a lot of work and the complexity of each site means that more surveys are required. It is taking approximately 3 years from design to be ready for work. This will impact on the Indicators of Success of the HLS and also increase the cost of delivery for each wetland restoration.</p>	<p>RESUME</p> <p>JS</p> <p>JT</p> <p>JS</p> <p>JS</p>

6. Wetland restoration audit	The FC is proposing to carry out a wetland restoration audit, to detail what works have taken place so far and draw out best practice. This will look at evidence beyond the New Forest and draw on data collected by the Environment Agency on fish populations and flow rates. This work will be undertaken by FC staff and outside contractors. The FC is in discussion with the River Restoration Centre to make use of it expertise. A provisional budget of £50,000 was approved by the Board.	RESUME
7. Queens Meadow track	Dealt with under Item 5.	DISMISS
8. Alex Lovegroves Phd	Alex Lovegrove will not complete his PhD by the scheduled date of December 2014. He is doing data analysis at present, but there is still some practical work he would like to do next summer. Bouremouth University may agree to fund an extension. AB to ask for an interim report of what he has found before the end of December. LS to check what has been paid so far.	RESUME AB LS
9. SAMs	Work on historic monuments other than SAMs is possible under the HLS. JT has explained that only the HLS Agreement can be used to identify what work can or cannot be undertaken as part of the HLS. There is a HER response map which identifies all the historic monuments within the HLS. Other sites which may be identified as part of the LiDAR work can be included, but works to maintain these historic monuments must be agreed with JT beforehand. LS to obtain copy of HER map and distribute to Board.	RESUME LS
10. LiDAR	Very good progress on LiDAR analysis was reported and the Board thanked Lawrence Shaw for his work. Work placement students are helping on the project for free. AB to check LSh knows that the year end is December.	RESUME AB
11. Bird Surveys	The Board thanked Ian Barker for his comprehensive and well written report.	RESUME
12. New Forest Non-native Plants Project	The Board is pleased with the work done by HIWWT. JT suggested they review the extent of Canadian Pondweed, which is spreading at Mill Lawn and consider possible control. This may require additional budget.	RESUME
13. Year 5 break clause	The break clause is an opportunity for review if there are serious problems with delivery of the HLS. JT supports the continuation of the HLS up to year 10 and she will confirm this with more senior management within NE.	RESUME JT
14. RPA Inspection – mapping and repayments	The RPA Inspector, Sam Smythe, has agreed to sit with LS and JT to explain the areas that are being removed from the scheme. It seems that the explanation for how the calculations were done to account for the repayment is still unfathomable. LS to write to customer services asking for a full breakdown of the calculation and an explanation.	RESUME LS
15. RPA	We are at the second stage of the appeal against this 5% fine. The	RESUME

Inspection – Burley Golf Course	RPA has until 8 th October to give us a response, having already asked for two time extensions. Sports clubs and pitches need notification in writing to confirm that each site is part of the HLS and abide by Cross Compliance regulations. JS to arrange this with Paul Grugeon.	JS
16. Communications	It was suggested that Natural England should give publicity about the success of the HLS in the New Forest as we are approaching our half way point. AB to consider doing a press release once we reach the halfway point on the LiDAR analysis.	RESUME JT AB
17. AOB	NFNPA propose buying some cycle counters as part of Dft funded cycling projects. The HLS paid for some cycle counters as a Capital Item in 2011 or 2012. The intention was for some to be placed on waymarked cycle routes and others on open forest where illegal cycling occurs. There has never been a report or analysis provided to the Board. JS to find out where these counters are now and what data was collected. Health check will be assessed at the January board meeting. JT and LS are going to meet to discuss the parameters, and will send these out to partners for completion by the middle of November. JS was concerned if we don't meet all the HLS criteria by the end of the project. JT will be assessing the Indicators of Success, not the RPA inspectors. .	RESUME JS JT+LS
18. Confirm Dates for Future Meetings	List of future meeting dates: 14 th January 2015 (site visit at Sluffers) 1 st April 2015 1 st July 2015 7 th October 2015	

Delegated Actions to		
Lawrence Shaw	LSh	Heritage Mapping and Data Officer, NFNPA
Grace Herve	GH	HLS Administrative Officer, FC
Ian Barker	IB	Ecologist, NFNPA
Hilary Makin	HM	Communications Manager, NFNPA
Julie Stubbs	JSt	LAS

Dominic May

Dominic May
Official Verderer

15th October 2014