



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

14th January 2015

MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 1^{4th} January 2015

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

| Item | Discussion | Action |
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| 1. Site Visit | <p>The Board visited Brockenhurst and East Boldre to look at parking issues on the Forest verges, and how the car free ditching has been renewed. It appears the bigger issue is loss of grass on the verges due to parking by residents, visitors and tourists on the verges. There is also a number of instances where commercial parking (e.g. builders) is taking place outside properties. JS confirmed it is as big a problem in the North of the Forest. The Board discussed the possibility of altering the car free ditching so that it better stops the vehicles from parking on verges. There are a couple of issues with this: the spoil from the ditches can't be placed on both sides of the ditch (often there will be a pile from previous ditch excavations) and if the new spoil is put on the opposite bank, we found that ponies were jumping the whole thing and landing in the road; the other issue is the extent of underground services that would need to be negotiated in order to move the ditchline.</p> <p>JT said there are some interesting and rare plants on the verges in the New Forest, for example in East Boldre one of the verges has Camomile growing.</p> <p>JS will look at the plans for the future car free ditching and will assess with Gary North which car free ditches need to be redug, and</p> | JS, GN |

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| | <p>which do not.</p> <p>The Board agreed in principle to support this as a worthwhile project.</p> <p>It was agreed to identify priority areas. The FC should let a contract for surveying where illegal parking is occurring, identify the extent of the damage and recommend priority areas for action.</p> <p>The NFNPA is willing to work with the Parish Councils to do some form of education. AB to investigate potential funds for employing a project officer to deliver the education and co-ordinate any works on the ground.</p> <p>The HLS could pay for dragons teeth and car free ditching or even for restoring areas already damaged, but could not pay for preventing the damage as this is the responsibility of the landowner. A meeting of Officers to draw up proposals for the next Board, AB, BR, JS, GN & LS.</p> | <p>JS</p> <p>AB</p> <p>AB, BR, JS, GN & LS</p> |
| 2. Declarations of Interest | <p>OV is a commoner & a member of the VGS; & is Chairman of the VGS Management Committee.</p> <p>GF is a commoner & a member of the VGS.</p> <p>AB declared an interest in all Wetland Restoration projects because of the NPA's responsibilities as local planning authority.</p> <p>OV knows Jonathan Cox, who has been awarded a new contract under the HLS, but was not involved in the contract award.</p> | RESUME |
| 3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the last meeting | <p>Item 3 – AP2 for 2013 was paid in September 2014; AP1 for 2014 was paid in December 2014.</p> <p>JT checked with Defra regarding the 50trees/ha rule in the new Basic Payment Scheme and Defra has not yet made a decision.</p> <p>Item 5 – JT is drawing up the parameters for measuring the success of wetland restoration. This will be used to look at which projects have been a success. JT to extract what makes a site favourable from the SSSI perspective. This will form part of the audit that the FC have commissioned by the Wetland Restoration Centre.</p> <p>Item 9 – SAMs have to be restored and managed. The HLS agreement does not specify the number of other historic monuments to be restored but an aspiration of 10 per year was originally agreed by the partnership. There was a discussion about what makes something a historic monument. The Board agreed that they were not equipped with the knowledge to judge that.</p> <p>LS to ask LSh to provide details for the East Boldre aerodrome monuments.</p> <p>LSh to ensure that the historic records coming from the LIDAR work are being fed into the Historic Records Centre.</p> <p>Item 12 – CC is looking into the possibility of managing Canadian Pondweed.</p> <p>Item 13 – The HLS continuation beyond year 5 has been approved by Natural England, therefore the HLS will continue for another 5 years to February 2020.</p> <p>Item 14 – LS and JT have had a meeting with the RPA to review the</p> | <p>JT</p> <p>LS, LSh</p> <p>LSh</p> <p>CC</p> <p>LS, JT</p> |

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| | <p>changes and are happy with the calculations for the reduction in payment. At present they are adding in those areas excluded during the inspection under the correct HLS option.</p> <p>RPA Appeal (was Item 10 on the agenda). The Verderers are continuing with the appeal and have cited the 'Wednesbury' principal of reasonableness.</p> <p>BR will follow up the sports clubs which did not attend the training, to invite them to another session.</p> <p>Item 17 – OV thanked JS for providing the report on Cycle Counters out in the Forest. It appears the Ashley counter is not working, JS to follow up. The report shows the amount of illegal cycling is high. These original cycle counters were put out near to car parks that were known to be used by cyclists riding on the Forest illegally. The original HLS project was to erect signs in car parks that were confirmed (by the cycle counters) as having an illegal cycling problem saying 'No Forest Cycling from this Car Park'.</p> <p>The health check has been delayed till the April meeting, to enable full data to be gathered.</p> | BR JS |
| 4. 2015 Programme Register | <p>The Honey Buzzard survey needs deleting as Natural England are going to do this instead.</p> <p>In the future LS is to send summary page from Programme Register out with the Board papers.</p> | LS |
| 5. FC Update | <p>OV suggested that the FC lets contracts for the remaining 5 years of the scheme, but due to procurement rules within the Forestry Commission, this is restricted to a maximum of 4 years.</p> <p>There is reference to a 3 year contract in the report and separately that Southern Counties Contractors has been awarded a contract. Clarification was sought whether this is one and the same contract. JS to check.</p> <p>Bracken management appears to have been awarded to two contractors. JS to check.</p> <p>A 4 year contract for the car free ditching has been awarded, so JS to look into the contract in case we need to revise the works on car free ditching.</p> <p>Nick Wardlaw is coming up with a plan for the whole HLS monitoring, which factors in the Wetland Restoration Monitoring.</p> | RESUME JS JS JS NW |
| 6. New Forest Non-Native Plants Project Annual Report from HIWWT | <p>Three quarters of the HLS funding was spent on the final report written by Dr Ewald. The report has been vital in telling us not to waste money on treating Crassula, as the treatments don't work. It also identified that our native species are still managing to survive in ponds affected by Crassula and this is due to grazing by livestock which is keeping the Crassula in check. The report said that the key element in managing Crassula is to stop the spread through having good bio-security. LS to distribute an executive summary of Dr Ewald's report to the Board. The report also should be uploaded on to the HLS website.</p> <p>LS to ask CC to detail what the £12,000 HLS funding will be spent</p> | LS LS, CC |

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| | on in 2015. | |
| 7. SAMs | <p>AB to find out why the aerodrome at East Boldre is of such historical importance.</p> <p>Holmsley bunker has not been blocked up yet and is scheduled for April. BR to investigate if it can be done immediately as it is a hazard to livestock.</p> | <p>AB</p> <p>BR</p> |
| 8. LIDAR | <p>The Board were pleased with the work LSh has done on the LIDAR. He is achieved a great deal, especially to have caught up with the schedule from such a difficult start. LSh managed to achieve the goals for the year as well, despite it being only 10 months long. The Board would like to give their thanks to Lawrence Shaw.</p> <p>HM to have a press release now to celebrate the half way mark with the LIDAR work.</p> <p>The point was raised that the cost of doing a LIDAR flight has greatly reduced now and it could be useful for the wetland restoration work to have updated LIDAR data. The Board can consider this at the next meeting if costs are available.</p> | <p>HM, LSh</p> |
| 9. Bird Surveys | <p>IB is going to share the bird reports with interested local groups. OV questioned the report's finding of a low number of Snipe in the Forest, as he felt he had seen more. This demonstrates the value of the report, as anecdotally it could be thought that Snipe were doing well, but many of these sightings could be the same individual displaying or more likely are sightings in the winter when Snipe are driven inland from the marshes. The survey was for breeding males in the summer and this is where numbers are low.</p> <p>All surveys have recommendations in them to assess how we can improve the habitat for the species that is being surveyed. JT and MB are looking at what can be done to follow up the surveys with management for the species, but obviously some species are more difficult than others. For example with Slender cotton grass, which is only found in 3 sites, the survey recommendations can be implemented and management is being planned, whilst the bird species found in the Forest often have many impacts on their numbers and some are outside our control (such as the Dartford Warbler whose population numbers are severely hit if there is a bad winter). The Board would like to ensure that these reports don't just sit on shelves, but get used. However, it should be noted that often the recommendations conflict with other species.</p> <p>The Board decided to facilitate a Wildlife Forum where these aspects could be discussed and it would help others understand that there are many conflicting factors in the management of the Forest. It was suggested that the AGM should host this Forum with a discussion about wildlife on the Forest and how these surveys can be used to best effect. LS and OV to come up with some leading questions to start the discussion.</p> | <p>JT, MB</p> <p>LS, OV</p> |
| 10. RPA Appeal | See comments under section 3 matters arising. | |
| 11. Communications | JT and AM are considering a press release on the HLS success. They would focus on the scale of the HLS and what aspects Natural England think are a success. JT to check with Hannah Thacker as she was working on this after the last Board meeting. | JT, AM |

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| 12. AOB | <p>The reports and papers for the Board meetings need to be with the Board members by the Friday before the Board meeting, to allow the weekend for background reading, even if it means not having all reports included.</p> <p>AGM on 1st April, to include: presentations from IB or Ecologist on bird reports; MB on FC surveys; certificate awards to LIDAR volunteers + those volunteers who helped with the SAMs work + the New Forest Non-native plants project volunteers; Wildlife Forum for the New Forest.</p> <p>AB to ask if Alex Lovegrove's supervisor has had any contact with him. The Board would like a report.</p> <p>GF would like a copy of the full Adder survey.</p> | LS LS, OV AB LS |
| 13. Confirm Dates for Future Meetings | <p style="text-align: center;">List of future meeting dates: 1st April 2015 Board Meeting 3pm followed by the AGM at 5.30pm 1st July 2015 7th October 2015</p> | |

| Delegated Actions to | | |
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| 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 |
| Nick Wardlaw | NW | HLS Hydro-geomorphologist, FC |
| Catherine Chatters | CC | New Forest Non-native Plants Project Coordinator |
| Marianne Bergin | MB | Senior Ecologist, FC |

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