



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

2nd July 2015

MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 1st July 2015

Voting Members		
Dominic May	OV	Official Verderer – Verderers of the New Forest (Chairman)
Steve Avery	SA	Standing in for Alison Barnes, Chief Executive – New Forest National Park Authority
Bruce Rothnie	BR	Deputy Surveyor – Forestry Commission
Non-Voting Members		
Jenny Thomas	JT	Lead Adviser New Forest - Natural England (NE)
Andy McDonald	AM	Manager - Natural England
Jane Smith	JS	Head of Planning and Environment - Forestry Commission
Sonia Lorenzo-Martin	SL	HLS Contract Manager - Forestry Commission
In Attendance		
Leanne Sargeant	LS	VGS Administrator taking minutes
Apologies		
Graham Ferris	GF	Commoners Defence Association Representative

SITE VISITS

The Board were accompanied by Lawrence Shaw, Lucy Andrews and Michael Ndeze on a visit to three historic sites in the South the Forest.

ROUNDHILLS CAMPSITE

In Roundhills Campsite, there is a pre-historic burial mound, 6,000 years old. It is currently fenced off to prevent the public damaging the site. The fencing has meant that the animals are no longer able to graze the mound and there is a lot of scrub, trees and coarse grasses growing on it. The FC proposal was to open the fence in 4 places to let the animals graze, and put up an interpretation board to explain to the public why it is important. JT suggested that instead a gate is installed in the fence so that it can be opened once the campsite is closed in the winter. The board approved installation of a gate. Permission for installing a gate may be needed from Historic England. The gate must be locked shut and locked open so that no animals can become trapped inside the fence. The old rotten 1' high vehicle protection rails around the outside are to be removed. NFNPA agreed to help with an interpretation board. It was agreed that the site would be monitored in case of damage around the gateway from

ACTION
 LSh
 ACTION
 LA

stock.

EAST BOLDRE WWI AIRFIELD

This site is of particular importance because of the rarity of First World War airfields. The site covers the area from East Boldre village hall (the village hall is the only remaining 1st WW building on the site) across the heath to the B3054 Beaulieu to Lymington road. It was a large installation. There are remains of concrete foundations across the whole area. The remains of the concrete structures are slightly raised which makes it drier and ideal for scrub and gorse. The proposal was to remove small trees. JT requested that any roses are left. If the scrub were to be removed, the stumps would have to be treated otherwise root growth would increase, further damaging the foundations. The Board decided not to have any intervention works except to remove non-native plants such as cotoneaster which was noticed at one site.

BARROW NEAR HILLTOP – IPERS BRIDGE ROAD

There are a number of ancient barrows in the area, including a large barrow that previously had the scrub removed and is now under pressure from the public walking up it for the view and illegally cycling over it. The small barrow nearby that was visited by the Board has not been managed before, but the ground cover is bare in places with some soil erosion. There is some rabbit damage. Unfortunately it is very difficult for the FC to manage rabbits on sites like this. LSh has a list of sites that need rabbit management. The FC proposal was to erect a fence for 1 year to let the site recover. JT wants confirmation first whether any clearance has been done on this site as it seems odd there is no bracken litter from previous years.

ACTION
MN/LSh

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies from Graham Ferris

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

OV is a commoner & a member of the VGS; & is Chairman of the VGS Management Committee.

SA declared an interest in all Wetland Restoration projects because of the NPA's responsibilities as local planning authority.

NEW BPS

JT has not yet been able to find out if the new BPS is continuing the 50 trees/ha rule for the New Forest.

ACTION
JT

The claim form for the HLS has been submitted, and an acknowledgement slip has been received.

HEALTH CHECK

A meeting needs to be arranged with JT, SL and LS to re-work the health check.

ACTION
LS

PROGRAMME REGISTER

The Board is confident that the HLS can deliver all the works planned in the Programme Register, but there is concern about the outcome of the planning issues with Pondhead wetland restoration.

The condition assessment carried out by NFLAS at the start of the scheme gave a very useful baseline survey for the Forest and informed the programme of works. It was used in place of a Farm Environment Plan. It will not need to be undertaken again in the life of the HLS.

The breeding waders and nightjar surveys are currently in the programme register for 2017/18. These repeat surveys should be undertaken 5 years after the initial ones i.e. in 2018 and 2019. Also the bird surveys must repeat the initial surveys, including Dartford warbler and woodlark. IB to revise the budget if necessary.

ACTION
IB

2019 is effectively the last delivery year of the scheme, as there are only 2 months in 2020 when the scheme ends in February. There could be a cash flow problem in 2016 with the currently-budgeted catch-up in underspend, as planned in the programme register. This is because the HLS is paid by NE in arrears each year and the final payments come in six months after the year end. The Board need to make plans for how to deal with this issue.

ACTION
LS

LS to remove the obsolete table from Programme Register summary.

USE OF CHEMICALS

SL to provide Board with a list of sports clubs that attended the NFLAS event in November 2014.

ACTION
SL

CYCLE COUNTERS AND CYCLE MANAGEMENT SIGNAGE

The cycle counter statistics presented to the Board were 9 months out-of-date, with no data since Nov 2014 onwards. All the graphs need to be represented on the same scale or even better on one graph with a line for each route for easy comparison. OV stated that the Board must have the latest statistics so that it can make informed decisions on management actions.

ACTION
SL

The cycle counter project was agreed by the 2011 Board, and a key part was that illegal cycling on non-cycle tracks identified from the cycle counter statistics would have a sign put up on the green ladder boards at offending car park entrances, saying 'No Forest Cycling from this Car Park'.

WETLAND RESTORATION

The recent Amberslade and Broomy wetland restoration had prompted a recent presentment at Verderers' court, and the FC staff were scheduled to meet with Verderers on site on 1st July.

The Latchmore EIA exhibition is on the 15th September. It would be a good idea to show the HLS wetland film as part of the exhibition, and to ask local people to advocate the benefits.

ACTION
SL

Felling licences don't have to be part of the planning application.

ACTION
SL

FC ADDITIONAL RESOURCES PROPOSAL

The Board agree the need to be able to efficiently see what the overall spend is for each project and whilst the programme register has been useful it doesn't give an easy system to keep up to date. SL is to find a suitable software package with a £3000 budget.

ACTION
SL

Because of workload, the FC is currently only able to start administrative preparation work the wetland restoration projects the year before the work starts. Monitoring of wetlands is needed to give enough pre- and post-restoration results to show that the restoration work is successful. The Board agreed to the FC letting a contract for the monitoring work and to prepare the administration for future wetland restorations, so that there is a clear understanding of the

expected costs of these future sites and gain a better idea of which sites are likely to need planning consent. SL to let a contract up to £20,000. SL must prepare a clear brief with key outcomes. If further funds are needed the Board should be approached at its October meeting.

ACTION
SL

There is also a lot of correspondence that needs specialist research and replies. The Board agreed that additional support for the FC's team would help alleviate some of the issues around responding to queries regarding the HLS works. It was suggested that a good spokesperson was needed who understands the Forest and can engage with local people. SA is to look into the possibility of using NPA resource.

ACTION
SA
ACTION
BR

BR to look at how best the FC could use admin support for the stakeholder engagement.

VERGE EROSION RESTORATION PROJECT

The verge erosion project should engage the keepers and get their input into the top ten worst areas on their beats. The project is now included in the National Park's 5yr Plan and the NPA to liaise with Parish Councils.

LOSS OF EXISTING LAWNS

The Agisters have raised the issue of retention of existing lawns at their recent staff meeting. They are concerned that priority is given to restoring lost lawns, but in the meantime the Forest is losing existing ones. They would like to see heather cutting continue on greens. Longslade, Pilley and Burley Rocks are all being lost. JT stated that where it is an issue of scrub encroachment or bracken these should be added to the HLS programme. JT will not agree to liming.

An annual open forest management programme is drawn up in June for works on areas like this. LS to collate a list of sites of concern with the Agisters and pass to the FC for inclusion.

ACTION
LS

SAMS

It appears that human intervention in the restoration of SAMs may actually be making this worse. Having survived for 6,000 years, why intervene now? The Board agreed that from now on there should only be minimal intervention simply filling rabbit holes with hoggins with no vegetation removal and no fencing.

ACTION
MN

It is important that these sites are photographed to assist with the monitoring of these sites.

WHITEFIELD MOOR SAM

Whitefield Moor SAM is currently fenced, but needs grazing and dunging to develop a tight sward. A gate should be installed in the fencing so that it can be opened in summer and closed in winter. The FC keeper and local Agister need to visit from time to time to ensure stock are not at risk from the anti-rabbit wire netting coming to the surface.

ACTION
LS

HOLMSLEY BUNKER

After previously being excavated, OV had requested the underground entrance was filled in again. However a gate has been erected, which is regretted. This is contrary to the advice received from the National Trust which had erected a gate to the Ibsley control room, only to find it broken into, with damage and graffiti. LS to ask JG to check that the entrance is not a stock hazard.

ACTION
LS

LIDAR ANALYSIS

Lawrence Shaw is doing a great job with the LiDAR project.

ARCHEOLOGY

The FC has received a complaint from NFHAG about the lack of engagement. The FC has tried to get the NFHAG records added to the Historic Environment Record in order to be able to take account of any other important historic monuments, but NFHAG has refused.

Date of next meeting 7th 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
Sonia Lorenzo-Martin	SL	HLS Contracts Manager
Lucy Andrews	LA	HLS Works Supervisor
Michael Ndeze	MN	Planning Forester



Dominic May
Official Verderer

