



**Verderers of the New Forest**  
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Official Verderer  
 Dominic May

7<sup>th</sup> October 2015

**MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

<b>Voting Members</b>		
Dominic May	OV	Official Verderer – Verderers of the New Forest (Chairman)
Alison Barnes	AB	Chief Executive – New Forest National Park Authority
Bruce Rothnie	BR	Deputy Surveyor – Forestry Commission
<b>Non-Voting Members</b>		
Jenny Thomas	JT	Lead Adviser New Forest - Natural England (NE)
Graham Ferris	GF	Commoners Defence Association Representative
Jane Smith	JS	Head of Planning and Environment - Forestry Commission
Sonia Lorenzo-Martin	SLM	HLS Contract Manager - Forestry Commission
<b>In Attendance</b>		
Leanne Sargeant	LS	VGS Administrator taking minutes

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

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.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

50 trees per hectare rule. JT had a response from the RPA, they have said that land with trees on it is eligible if the trees are scattered and they allow for agricultural activity to be carried on as normal. They must not restrict ground flora growth. There must also be no cutting of trees from 1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> August. The RPA are still working out how this applies to the New Forest . LS to look back through the minutes as to why we are concerned about the number of trees allowed per hectare.

Action JT +  
 LS

Health check. LS and SLM met with David Andrews to revamp the health check so that it will better reflect the excellent work that is being delivered by the HLS. The health check will be presented to the Board in April. This will include maps of the various HLS works around the Forest, which will also be used for the AGM.

LS to set dates for 2016 meetings and AGM after the HLS Board in April.

Action LS

Amberslade and Broomy wetland restoration work was completed by Five Rivers as was Corbets Hat, their performance for this year will be used in the scoring process for next years contracts. The FC have 3 contractors on the Framework that they can use. The FC staff need to manage the contracts more closely and try to ensure that there are no implementation problems in future years.

Action SLM

LS to send Lucy Andrews the list of lawns that the Agisters drew up. Pass to GF as well.

Action LS

Whitefield Moor. It was agreed to put a gate in the fence around the SAM, but this has not happened this summer. The Board agreed instead to remove the wire from the moor side (not roadside) and allow stock in over the winter. JT is happy for it to be open through the winter. JS to check the management plan for the SAM allows for the fence to be open through the winter. SLM to get wire removed on one side only (not roadside). LS to ask Robert Maton to keep an eye on it and make sure it remains safe for livestock.

Action JS +  
SLM + LS

Holmsley Bunker had a new gate fitted, this was inspected by Jonathan Gerrelli and it was felt that animals could get a leg stuck in the gate. SLM to organise getting a board put on and it back filled with locally sourced hoggin so it is stock proof.

Action SLM

Programme register needed to be updated by IB with regards to the bird survey dates. LS to complete.

Action LS

#### PROGRAMME REGISTER AND SUMMARY

Longbeech mire should read £26,418.

Item 66 is for bracken control and seems to be a lower spend than item 67 which is for a study of bracken management.

Simon Weymouth is fulfilling a contract to assess the wetland sites for the remainder of the scheme and draw up a revised plan of what sites and extent of work is required. AB needs to know which sites are going to need planning consent in order to ensure the NPA have sufficient staff to cover the workload.

There is likely to be a cash flow problem in 2016 and going forwards as the HLS is paid in arrears. It has not been an issue to date as we had a big underspend, but if the FC delivers all its planned work from mid-2016 there is likely to be an issue. This needs to be factored in to FC budgets.

Action ALL

#### FC UPDATE

There are 4 sports clubs that have still not been trained for good environmental management of the SSSI. It was suggested that one way to achieve these clubs' attendance would be to send a strongly worded letter saying that ignoring the issue would place a future lease renewal at risk. BR to chase Paul Grugeon.

Action BR

All the sites with off-route cycle counters will have a new No Forest Cycling sign added to the ladder board. SLM to ensure that the graphs for the cycle counter are all to the same scale, ie the axis numbers run the same for easy comparison (ie 0-10,000).

Action SLM

The whole HLS Board are to be informed about key events.

Action ALL

The bracken control study is a 4 year contract to follow up on the survey that mapped the key bracken areas from the start of the HLS. The study will look at the effects of different techniques for bracken control and their effectiveness. BR to look at the whole Bracken plan and review. SLM to send a copy of the contract to All Board members. LS to add to the next board agenda. The board hoped that the FC will this year catch up with bracken control not carried out in 2014 as well as 2015's schedule.

Action SLM  
+ BR + LS  
Action DM

Harvestslade still has 2 to 3 days of work infilling the side ditches and 1 week to tidy up and

leave the site. The work was stopped from Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October due to rain. The extension was until Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October for works in the main channel, the works left to finish are all away from the main channel so can carry on after the extension. SLM to get this on the HLS website.

Action SLM

JT spoke with George Farwell about the use of basalt on the New Forest and emphasised that only locally sourced materials such as hoggin should be used.

Terrestrial restoration plan. The verge restoration project is part of the guttering and dragons teeth which Gary North is working on. He is reviewing the current guttering and dragons teeth plan with the keepers for the next few years. There are currently 2 contracts which expire in February and October 2016. SLM to get plan from Gary North for the January board meeting. LS to add it to the agenda. The NFNPA can then discuss the project with the parish councils through their quadrant meetings.

Action SLM  
+ LS

The Western Escarpment verge project with the parish councils is under way and the new leaflet is being printed.

Adder report is going to be reviewed by JT and SLM; they will look at the recommendations in the report and assess which ones can be implemented into the land management without negatively impacting on any other rare species. The report demonstrates that adders are actually well spread across the Forest.

JT looks at all these reports and pulls out the management from those reports and builds it into the FC work plan. For example the report about Southern Damselfly recommended some specific areas that needed burning and they have been added to the burn programme.

Pondhead planning application was reviewed by the Secretary of State and it has now been confirmed that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is not needed. The planning application will go to the November planning committee. SLM to confirm date for OV to attend.

Action SLM

The report from the Wetland Restoration Centre was commissioned as part of the EIA for Latchmoor and has been independently written to assess the wetland restoration work completed so far in the New Forest. The WRC is the expert national body on wetland restoration. The report highlights the excellent work achieved in the New Forest. It does stress that in some instances compromises had to be made to maintain the grazing needed for livestock, but it also expresses the way that the FC has learnt from its mistakes and how the more recent wetland projects have excelled in restoring the wetland habitats. LS to send GF a link to full report.

Action LS

#### NON-NATIVE INVASIVE PLANTS PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT

Thanks to HIWWT for the excellent report; the Board is pleased with the progress that the project has continued to make.

#### SAMS UPDATE

The table of works needs to be split into 2 sections, one on SAMs and one for any other historic features. LSh to set out any other historic features that require works and justify why the work needs to be done and put a proposal to the Board for funds to cover this work. Work on SAMs will continue as before.

Action LSh

The Iron Age hill fort at Longwater Lawn which needs 2 temporary barriers will need the consent of the Verderers for the barriers.

Action LSh

#### LIDAR UPDATE

It is not clear what period the report covers. It should cover Jan to Dec 2015 to fall in line with the new financial year. LSh to amend report and make sure the figures reflect what will be delivered within the financial year.

Action LSh

The Board want to congratulate Lawrence Shaw and the team that worked on the exhibition, it looks fantastic.

INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION ASSISTANT PROPOSAL

Natural England supported the proposal. The Board agreed £11,000 budget and £15,000 for the staff costs of the new Interpretation and Education Assistant. AB may request an additional budget for the Communication Manager's time to support that new post. AB to set a start date.

Action AB

LATCHMOOR EIA

The Latchmoor Environmental Impact Assessment informs the Environmental Statement that will be submitted with the planning application. There were a number of reports that were done as part of the EIA, and these will form appendices to the Environmental Statement. The planning application will be submitted in November, but because of its size the NPA will have 4 months to review it, so it will probably be considered by the planning committee in April 2016.

AOB

The follow up scheme from the HLS is the new Countryside Stewardship Scheme, which is in its first year. The National Trust and Hampshire County Council commons will come out of HLS first and so they will set a precedent for the New Forest. The Board will continue to look at how the new scheme is likely to unfold for the Forest.

DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- 6<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 9am
- 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 2pm, followed by the AGM at 5.30pm.
- 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016 at 9am
- 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016 at 9am

Delegated Actions to		
Lawrence Shaw	LSH	Heritage Mapping and Data Officer, NFNPA
Dave Morris	DM	



Dominic May  
Official Verderer