



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

6th January 2016

MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 6th January 2016

Voting Members		
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
Non-Voting Members		
Jenny Thomas	JT	Lead Adviser New Forest - Natural England (NE)
Andy McDonald	AM	Manager – Natural England
Graham Ferris	GF	Commoners Defence Association Representative
Sonia Lorenzo-Martin	SLM	HLS Contract Manager - Forestry Commission
In Attendance		
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

Ideas for the AGM: talk on monitoring by the FC or NPA, explaining how we are using results and showing what work will be done to help; OV will do annual report; film clips from FC of wetland restoration; LSh to do a talk on LiDAR, Catherine Chatters re non-native plant control; Volunteer Certificate presentation (FC- Riverfly and Two Trees, NNIVP, LiDAR).

Action LS

BR to chase Paul Grugeon re the Sports Clubs training; what has happened?

Action BR

Due to mechanical issues with the forage harvester the bracken control and forage harvesting programme for 2014 could not be completed. The rest of the bracken management programme (including herbicide application, swiping and baling) was carried out. SLM to report to Board if we have caught up in 2015, detail what was target for 2014 and 2015, how much was actually done in 2015. Normally do 100ha and in 2015 did 190ha, which includes the Asulox treatment.

Action SLM

Pondhead Planning Application will go to the planning committee at the earliest March or April. The consultants are working on the topographical survey.

Cash flow for the Forestry Commission HLS expenditure in 2016 and for the remainder of the HLS, will not be a major issue, as the FC Director of Finance has agreed a more flexible approach.

VERGE RESTORATION PROJECT

There are two areas currently being restored:

1. Western Escarpment, which is being led by the Parish Councils, includes some FC work.
2. East Boldre which is in the planning stage, but should be carried out in 2016. AB to add it to the Quadrant meetings agendas, in order to engage the Parish Councils. Barry Dowsett is the lead contact for the Verderers. Action AB

SLM to ensure the Board receive a full update with costs, on both Western Escarpment & East Boldre, at the next meeting. Action SLM

PROGRAMME REGISTER AND SUMMARY

2015 sheet of the programme register:

Item 18 Drift fencing has not spent the whole budget as there was less work to do. Next year we are hoping to do some re-instatement around the water troughs.

Item 32 SAMs work was done, but the invoice has not yet come in; SLM to allocate it to 2015 when it comes in. Action SLM

Item 68 Coppicing/Pollarding has no spend recorded, but there has been some fencing work done around the holly pollards as part of a trial. SLM to find out if there was a cost. Action SLM

Item 103 Water Quality Sampling was only done for Latchmore as part of the EIA. The Board would like Water Sampling both before and after at all the 2016 restoration sites; additionally, after samples should be taken for all those sites completed in 2015. The Board would like a table showing timescales of sampling and works. Action SLM

Item 56 Roe-Linford planning not done in 2015; the budget needs to be transferred into 2016. Action SLM

Item 80 Harvestslade wetland restoration went massively over the original estimate because of the cost of closing the layby on the A31 to relieve concerns over transport movements of materials. The FC will prepare more accurate estimates for future sites.

Total expenditure is missing from all years of the programme register. Action LS

The Board want to see the final spend for 2015 at the April meeting. Action LS

2016 sheet of the programme register:

Item 70 needs the name changing to 'Verge Restoration'. Action SLM

The following planning applications are scheduled to be submitted: Pondhead in April; Latchmore (Islands Thorns, Thompson's Castle and Latchmore) in February and Wootton in March.

Item 95 Denny Bog will move to 2017. Action SLM

Dibden Bottom will be a smaller scheme than originally estimated.

Roe-Linford will require a new tender for the planning consultants.

Add Item for Interpretation and Education Officer - £26,000. The cost for December 2015 needs to be accrued. Action LS

2017 – 2019 sheets of the programme register:

Item 70 needs the name changing to 'Verge Restoration'. Action SLM

Add Item for Interpretation and Education Officer - £26,000. Action LS

FC UPDATE

Whitefield Moor: Board want it to be permanently open on one side, and if there are problems we will have to wire across temporarily. SLM to arrange to have the wire removed on one side, as per the Board's October decision. Action SLM

Holmsley Bunker entrance must be filled in. SLM to inform Lucy Andrews. Action SLM

Cycle signs should read 'No Forest Cycling from this Car Park' as agreed in 2011; BR to arrange changes. Action BR

In future reports, and on the programme register, the words 'repair and maintenance' are preferred. Action SLM

The table showing the list of recommendations that have been drawn from the surveys needs to explain more clearly what the management is trying to do. For example in the adder survey, it would be more clear if it said continue with existing open forest management. SLM to improve wording for next Board meeting. Action SLM

SAMs: 2 were restored the last quarter of 2015, giving a total of 10 completed for the whole year.

SLM needs to prepare a tender for planning consultants, as we are unable to extend the existing contract as the contract has reached its procurement limit. Action SLM

A Local Development Order is still a possibility, but once we have achieved positive outcomes for the current planning applications. An LDO would be more of a legacy for beyond the HLS.

Further bracken management trials were proposed at a cost of £42,000 split over 4 years. The Board did not approve the expenditure, so the further bracken survey will not go ahead. Action SLM

WETLAND RESTORATION REVIEWS

The Verderers have received many complaints about wetland restoration work which it turns out were all sites that were contracted to Five Rivers. The Verderers had no complaints about the work carried out by Alaska and Farwells. Natural England said that the poor work could cause ecological issues as well. The Board is extremely disappointed with the work of Five Rivers. The Board feels very strongly that Five Rivers have proved themselves incapable of carrying out the sensitive nature of the work in the New Forest, and should not be given any further work.

In the review process, it was proposed that contractors were also scored on their good communications with the public around the site. Action SLM

SAMS UPDATE

9 sites have been approved for 2016. JT not concerned if not reached the target, so long as we are working on those that are needed.

LIDAR UPDATE

LSh to change the statistical year from 2015/16 to report just on the calendar year, January to December 2015, and future calendar years. Action LSh

The Board is pleased with the on-going LiDAR analysis, and applauds the success of the exhibition.

NON-NATIVE INVASIVE PLANTS PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT

This project is giving the HLS its best value for money. The Board continue to be pleased with the work completed by Catherine Chatters.

The Board recommends a press release about the successful eradication of parrot's feather. Action MS/CC

The Board approved the proposal to reallocate some of HIWWT's existing HLS budget for setting up a Living Record for Non-Native Invasive Plants as per the paper. Action CC

ENGAGEMENT AND INTERPRETATION OFFICER REPORT

The Board is pleased with initial progress.

REMOVAL OF CONCRETE AND TARMAC FROM AROUND THE FOREST

The Board agreed a new project to remove areas of old concrete or tarmac on the open Forest that remains, for example from the second world war. Any areas to be removed would need to have the approval of the Archaeologist at the National Park Authority. AB to find out what extent of information is already held by the Historic Environment team, and come up Action AB

with a proposal to map the remainder.

Re-instatement would involve removing the concrete or tarmac and, if required, infilling with hoggin.

AOB

GF suggested we could have a site visit with Catherine Chatters to see the work of the Non-Native Invasive Plants project, at the start of the 6th July meeting.

Action
LS/CC

DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

13th April 2016 at 2pm, followed by the AGM at 5.30pm.

6th July 2016 at 9am

5th October 2016 at 9am

Delegated Actions to		
Lawrence Shaw	LSh	Heritage Mapping and Data Officer, NFNPA
Catherine Chatters	CC	Non Native Invasive Plants Project Officer, HIWWT
Matt Stroud	MS	Engagement and Interpretation Officer, NFNPA



Dominic May
Official Verderer