



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

24<sup>th</sup> October 2016

## MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Voting Members		
Dominic May	OV	Official Verderer – Verderers of the New Forest (Chairman)
Alison Barnes	AB	Chief Executive – New Forest National Park Authority
Non-Voting Members		
Jenny Thomas	JT	Lead Adviser New Forest - Natural England (NE)
Andy McDonald	AM	Team Leader – Natural England
Sonia Lorenzo-Martin	SLM	Head of Planning and Environment – Forestry Commission
Nick Wardlaw	NW	HLS Contract Manager – Forestry Commission
In Attendance		
Tina Woodley	TW	VGS Administrator

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Bruce Rothnie Deputy Surveyor – Forestry Commission

### 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

#### Latchmoor Railway Embankment

JT confirmed that the area could not be added to the current HLS, but should be included in a future successor scheme.

DISCHARGE

#### LIDAR ANALYSIS OF TARMAC AND CONCRETE ON OPEN FOREST

The board studied the LiDAR analysis of the tarmac and concrete on the open forest supplied by Lawrence Shaw. OV stated that this report did not fulfil the brief as it only highlighted the large areas of concrete on the forest, of which 90% are currently being used as tracks. OV commented there would be no ecological benefit of removing these as replacement hoggin tracks would need to be installed. OV asked the report to include the small areas of concrete which should be returned to grazing e.g. disused building bases.

RESUME

AB asked if the FC keepers could report to LS on locations as they have local knowledge. SLM said she would ask the keepers to assist in identifying what was obsolete concrete. Action SLM

SLM had received a report from Hyde PC of a large amount of concrete that could possibly be removed near to the footbridge at Ogdens. OV envisages this to be part of the role of the new Verge Restoration Officer, also being able to assist in locating sites, and assisting to return the forest to good condition.

JT commented that care should be taken when looking to remove the concrete as in some cases ecological rarities are attracted to these sites. OV felt the Verge Restoration Officer would benefit from liaising with the OS as they have excellent maps for identifying historical features, and access is free for all public bodies.

#### LATCHMORE WETLAND RESTORATION

AB confirmed that the Latchmore planning meeting will be 15<sup>th</sup> November and that NE will be providing a report regarding terms of reference by 20<sup>th</sup> October. OV asked if the report would be ready in time. AMcD commented that the report was being peer reviewed and was with NEASC and that this report was not prompted by or connected to the Latchmore project.

AB asked that it should be clear, with easy to digest the conclusions. OV agreed that it should be clear and concise for the layman to understand. AB asked NE to attend the planning meeting. NW said the FC team will arrange speakers. Action SLM

#### SPORTS CLUBS

OV again raised the issue that PG has not arranged a session for those sports clubs which did not attend the previous cross compliance training. OV is concerned that the clubs would not absorb written information and that those clubs that did not attend the first teach-in session should be made to attend a second teach-in session and the FC should threaten to refuse to renew their licences if they do not attend. JT asked SLM about the list of approved chemicals as she is worried the list is out of date. JT asked to get the list updated. SLM agreed to action. RESUME  
Action SLM

#### MODEL TO REPRESENT WETLAND RESTORATION

The board agreed to put the project on hold, but revisit as part of future communications projects DISCHARGE

#### PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF COMPLETE LIST OF FUTURE WETLAND RESTORATIONS

SLM agreed FC will add everything from the programme register to the HLS website and that the list will be updated regularly. DISCHARGE

#### WORK IN PROGRESS

AB expressed concerns on the lack of communication about the status of the on-going works. Firstly the NPA planning department had not been informed that work had stopped at Wootton due to ground conditions and secondly that a complaint had been received that Pondhead work had allegedly not complied with planning consent. AB asked the FC to report to the board when plans change either on current sites or future projects as it is important to give the parish councils feedback and information to keep people informed. SLM stated the FC had made the right decision with reference to the ground conditions. DISCHARGE

AB asked NW about the details of the alleged deviation at Pondhead. NW reported they had not yet finished that phase of work and the 6-7m deviation was only temporary and would be filled in and put back in the original position when finished. AB reiterated the need for good communications from the FC.

GF noted there was an erosion of confidence in the works amongst commoners due to some complaints about the standard of the repair and maintenance. OV stated that we cannot afford to lose the support of the commoners after the implementation stage and that not enough remedial works are being knocked off the list. JT stated that her experience with

locals of New Milton showed a positive interest in the works at Wootton. AB announced that from now on the Park Life paper will be included twice yearly in the Lymington Times which will be a boost to keeping local residents informed.

#### STUDY INTO THE PONIES EATING THE BARK OF BEECH TREES

RESUME

SLM reported that Forest Research are putting together a proposal for the study. GF requested that he is both consulted and involved with the study. SLM and GF to liaise. SLM reported fresh damage had been observed during September. JT commented that this was a nationwide problem but in other areas NE was able to put adequate protections in place.

#### PROGRAMME REGISTER AND SUMMARY

RESUME

SLM reports that completion of Pondhead and Wootton will be carried over into next year. OV asked if that meant double the work load for next year. SLM and JT are due to meet to discuss how many projects it is possible to do in one year. NW had asked Alaska if they were able to double their commitment but reported they were unable to do this and still ensure the high quality of work required.

GF questioned the under spend on water quality testing. OV replied that the amount of planning issues and FOI requests have meant management resources have needed to be redirected. GF expressed his concern that not prioritizing tasks now will store up problems for the future.

OV remarked that the Terrestrial Restoration works have been a huge success and they are not objected to. NW followed to say that most of the minor Wetland Restoration works had received no objections and had also gone well, with the quality of works good.

GF asked why the cost of works at Suburbs Wood was so high. SLM replied that it has been completed and paid for in full and the increased cost was due to adverse weather conditions.

#### FC UPDATE

RESUME

##### Five Rivers

Five Rivers have been given a chance to finish their two sites to show improved quality. OV requested site visits be carried out by NW and Verderers to inspect the quality of work. He suggested Dave Readhead to visit Cowley and Anthony Pasmore to visit Longbeech. OV said he would be happy to take their recommendations.

Action NW

##### Verge Restoration Officer

RESUME

The board had a discussion as to which partner should recruit for the position of Verge Restoration Officer. It was agreed that the officer would need access to the FC files as well as the FC GIS facilities and would need to be a FC employee to arrange contracting on the forest. SLM will action the recruitment as quickly as possible. The board felt it was essential for the candidate to be a local person, hopefully a commoner who knows the forest and is aware of the unique nature of its problems.

Action SLM

##### HLS MONITORING OFFICER

RESUME

JT stated this was a very important requirement. OV questioned as to whether the HLS could fund this position. JT replied it could be funded by the HLS. The board agreed with the proposal. SLM to recruit.

Action SLM

##### VERGE RESTORATION PROJECT

RESUME

OV reported works have been started in Woodgreen and Fritham. The Verge Restoration Officer would co-ordinate and directly consults with Parish Councils and the public, which will remove the need for public engagement with those carrying out the works. Problems with local residents have been reported and it is hoped this will be alleviated by the presence of a VRO. No works have yet been done at East Boldre.

A meeting is due to be held with OV, JT and Cllr Humby from HCC regarding Broomy Plain. OV also informed the board of a HCC plan to close the unsafe road between The White Buck and 11 Crossing Keepers Cottage. HCC are keen as it would require less maintenance and it would be good for the verge restoration. OV added that HLS funds had been offered to cover the statutory costs of the project. AMcD asked if it was a good opportunity for positive

publicity.

#### LiDAR UPDATE

AB reported that LS is looking forward to the upcoming field work season. OV requested the field work volunteers contribute to identifying concrete and farmac on the forest which should be removed.

DISCHARGE  
Action LS

#### HLS MONUMENT REPORT AND TABLES

AB asked whether the Historic England Management agreement had been renewed. SLM replied it is being done. GF asked if the barricades on 20218 and 20329 were temporary. JT added that she was worried that bracken removal was not helpful and should it be abandoned in favour of looking more at the removal of birches etc. AB replied that advice was needed from FG. OV reported that the fence at Whitefield Moor had been mentioned at court as being in poor repair. JT said she would have a look at the fence at Whitefield Moor and Hilltop and decide whether they should be removed completely and report back to the FC. OV questioned whether NE had looked at the monument at Roundhill Campsite. SLM reported that the gate had been installed. JT asked if it had been opened to allow the area to be grazed. SLM said she would find out.

DISCHARGE  
Action AB  
Action JT  
Action SLM

#### HIWWT UPDATE

OV commented that the Non Native Plant project returned the best value for money. AB liked the amount of detail on the report. The board continue to be impressed with all Catherine Chatters' hard work.

DISCHARGE

#### LAND ADVICE SERVICE UPDATE

GF reported that the Land Advice Service had been brilliant at supporting commoners through the BPS issue and is continuing to offer support. OV informed JT about the increase in stock numbers due to the BPS. JT replied that she has not seen any evidence of overgrazing and will continue monitoring. OV added that he asks for reports at every Court. JT said she would keep an eye on the situation. AB commented that the Welfare Tours prove that everything is in good condition. GF reported that commoners were very supportive of the LAS.

DISCHARGE

#### ENGAGEMENT AND INTERPRETATION OFFICER REPORT

AB showed the board the 360 degree pictures that are available to view on the website and she also showed a sample of the photos taken by Mike Read that are also available, proving the visual importance of these images. AB informed the board that there are very strict rules attached to the flying of drones. OV asked if MS had applied for a licence. SLM confirmed he had. The board is happy with the E&I officer's contribution.

#### AOB

#### NE STATEMENT

The board delegated NE to respond to the question about dual funding. NE will send a response to the Lymington Times through its press office.

#### REDUNDANCY CONTINGENCY

SLM asked what the redundancy contingency was for on the Programme Register. OV answered that a previous DS had insisted it be included and can now be removed. A redundancy contingency needs to be added into the final years budget (19/20) in case there is no follow on scheme.

Meeting closed at 1.45pm

DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

11<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at 9am

5<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 2pm followed by AGM at 5.30pm

Delegated Actions to		
Nick Wardlaw	NW	HLS Contract Manager, FC
Sonia Lorenzo-Martin	SLM	Head of Planning and Environment, FC
Jenny Thomas	JT	Lead Advisor New Forest, NE
Alison Barnes	AB	Chief Executive, NFNPA
Lawrence Shaw	LS	Lidar Officer, NFNPA



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