



Official Verderer
 Dominic May

9 May 2013

MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3 APRIL 2013

Voting Members		
Dominic May	OV	Official Verderer – Verderers of the New Forest (Chairman)
Alison Barnes	AB	Chief Executive – New Forest National Park Authority
Mike Seddon	MS	Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest – Forestry Commission
Non-Voting Members		
Jenny Thomas	JT	Natural England
Graham Ferris	GF	Chairman – CDA
In Attendance		
Andy McDonald	AM	Natural England
Colin Draper	CD	VGS Manager taking minutes

Item	Discussion	Action
1. Apologies for absence	All members were present.	RESUME
2. Declarations of Interest	OV is a commoner & a member of the VGS & Chairman of the VGS Management Committee. GF is a member of the VGS. AB declared an interest in all Wetland Restoration projects because of the NPA's responsibilities as local planning authority.	RESUME
3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the last meeting	The minutes of the last meeting were previously approved by e-mail circulation so they could be distributed to all relevant parties for Action. They are posted on the HLS website. The following items were discussed: Item 3.2. The proposed site meeting to review plans at Penny Moor has not yet taken place. No decision has been taken on how to deal with the rare plants on the middle section of the area to be restored. The CDA has agreed a way forward with project staff at the FC and a decision is awaited on how to proceed. Item 3.5. Members were briefed on ongoing discussions with the National Trust over the level of grazing payments on the commons. CD is arranging a meeting with JT and representatives from the HLS holders on the Adjacent Commons: NT, HCC, Wellow PC, and Mr Robert Taylor who owns Waterslade Farm, to agree the level of future payments. Item 3.13. The draft information leaflet is now with the FC for clarification of the legal issues in relation to ditch boundaries. Item 3.14. The Board noted the report by Frank Green (FG) on the opportunities being pursued for funding to restore Eyeworth Weir.	RESUME

	<p>Item 14. CD informed the meeting that a target of 50 visits per year by the LAS, to commoners' holdings, was agreed at the recent steering group meeting reflecting the priority set by the VGS Management Committee.</p> <p>Item 16. Funding for the Non Native Plants project was approved out of committee after the last meeting. It was decided that funding for trials with aquatic dye should be discontinued because this has proved unsuccessful, and that funding should be limited to trials of: the 'hot foam' treatment, which was curtailed last year because of the high water levels; and glyphosate herbicide.</p> <p>Item 19. Alex Lovegrove (AL) has been asked to brief the Board at the next meeting. The Board requested a 5 minute brief followed by an opportunity for questions.</p> <p>Item 21. The Board noted the 'Communications Strategy' paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was felt that it was focused too much at a local level and that more emphasis should be placed on a national audience, including MPs, Ministers (Defra), and Natural England (NE) as well as the wider public. • The timescale for approvals was accepted for proactive items but it was felt that a swifter response would normally be necessary where the response is reactive. • Inclusion of the 'Lapwing' survey in May was questioned as the programme this year is for a 'Nightjar' survey: the programme to be amended. • The Board asked for Wetland projects and Grazing achievements (such as the 91% of stock entered in the VGS) to be included in the list of PR opportunities. • Items for publication to be checked first with the NE Communications officer, Linzee Letman. • It was agreed that draft case studies should be prepared. • A forward planning table summarising communications opportunities to be tabled for each Board meeting for consideration. • The Board agreed that partners should charge the HLS for PR services but, this is to be limited to the 'additional' costs such as photographers, etc. The originally agreed figure of £250 per press release (Minutes of the Board meeting on 17 January 2011; minute 5d) will no longer apply. • It was agreed that rather than a single focus for Communications, each partner would continue to be responsible for their own PR. 	<p>AL</p> <p>Hilary Makin (HM)</p>
<p>4. Health Check</p>	<p>The Board reviewed progress on the items highlighted in red on the annual 'Health Check' checklist, where action is outstanding:</p> <p>Health Check Item 2. Underspend. A detailed plan to address the underspend on Wetland Restoration has been prepared by the FC (see Item 6).</p> <p>Health Check Item 5 Wetland Restoration. MS informed the Board that an agent will be appointed by mid June to manage planning applications. These will be required for 'major' engineering works and FC has asked NPA for a baseline above which projects will require consent. NE has also been challenged on EIA Agricultural Regulations .</p> <p>Health Check Items 22 and 23 Historical Environment: data processing programme; and data sharing agreement. In hand.</p> <p>Health Check Item 24 Historical Environment; consultation procedure. MS provided the Board with a draft paper; JT to provide feedback.</p>	<p>RESUME</p> <p>JT</p>

	<p>Health Check Item 26 Historical Environment; priority list. NE asked for the list to be updated to show current condition of each monument and site.</p> <p>Health Check Item 27 Historical Environment Feature Management. The target of 10 monuments to be restored per year was not included in the HLS Agreement. The Board asked for this to be cross referenced with the relevant minute from the Board meeting where the figure was originally agreed if, indeed, the target has been formally approved by the Board.</p> <p><i>Afternote. Board Meeting 8/2/12: Minute 17 SAM. 'KP noted a requirement to bring 10 monuments back into favourable condition each year'. There is no reference to the figure being proposed or agreed in the minutes of earlier meetings. It is possible that it came from the New Forest LiDAR analysis, data provision and monument protection project proposal which included a suggestion that 'ten monuments may be identified each year as requiring positive management options'.</i></p> <p>Health Check Item 35 Record of stock distribution on Scheme area. CD informed the Board that earlier work on this needs updating to take account of the increase in stock turned out last year, particularly cattle numbers, which increased considerably. It is intended that the record will be provided on GIS; work to be completed by the end of June.</p> <p>Health Check Items 49 and 51 Capital Works Historical and Archaeological feature protection and Beaulieu Aerodrome. In hand.</p> <p>Health Check Item 55 Capital Works Special Projects. JT confirmed that £35k has been carried forward to 2013/14</p>	FG
5. Latchmore Project	MS informed the Board that the Hydrology report commissioned by NE is now complete.	RESUME
6. Wetland Restoration	<p>The Board noted the Wetland Restoration Delivery Plan and the supporting tables prepared by Jane Smith (JS) for the FC. JT expressed concern that the plan does not account for the total underspend on wetland restoration to date. The total sum allocated for this in the HLS agreement is £7.5m but the plan falls short of this. There was some discussion over what projects could be funded under this heading, as work to control bracken and invasive pine was not funded but is essential to the Indicators Of Success. It was agreed that where this work contributes to wetland projects the costs should be included. Other costs, such as planning applications, flood modelling, consent fees, etc, where these are essential elements of wetland restoration projects, should also be included. It was agreed that JT and JS would agree a programme for the remainder of the HLS.</p>	RESUME JT/JS
7. 2012/13 Programme Register	<p>The end of year expenditure was noted. MS queried the payment of £2k for removal of bracken litter which is not shown on the Register. <i>Afternote.</i> Payment remains outstanding and will be accrued back to 2012/13 in the HLS account.</p>	RESUME GH
8. 2013/14 Programme Register	<p>OV drew attention to several amendments to the Register:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of a new serial 12, £12k allocated to an annual programme to rebuild up to 4 pounds a year for the remainder of the HLS. • Inclusion of 2 new serials 25 and 26; Bracken Control and Car Free Ditching. FC was asked to provide projected costs for these. 	RESUME GH

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items 42 to 53 have now been included under Wetland Restoration and not listed separately. It was agreed that JS should include these costs in the table discussed at Item 6. <p>MS asked for a new serial 27 to be added to the table with a cost of £20k for 'Open Forest GIS'</p>	<p>JS</p> <p>GH</p>
9. HLS Staffing & Partner Resources for Delivery of Programmes	<p>MS confirmed the appointment of 2 new short term staff members: Russell Wright and Jackie Kelly who are assisting with planning for wetland restoration projects.</p> <p>AB informed the Board that work is in hand to appoint an additional temporary staff member to assist with LiDAR analysis.</p>	RESUME
10. Verderers' Grazing Scheme' (VGS)	<p>OV informed the Board that grazing payments to VGS members on the Crown Lands for 2012/13 was made by electronic transfer on 28 February 2013.</p>	RESUME
11. Capital Works by FC	<p>MS informed the Board that car free ditching work is continuing. There have been some complaints from members of the public who are upset that, as intended, the ditches are preventing them from parking on the verges, but in most cases there is a car park within a reasonable distance. The programme is progressing well; ditching complies with a standard profile, and the contractor is doing a good job. A comment was made about the signage displayed by the contractor which misleadingly advertises 'drainage work in progress' but this was not thought to be a significant concern.</p> <p>Funding for Beaulieu Aerodrome and Rabbit Netting has been carried forward to this year 2013/14.</p>	RESUME
12. SAMs	<p>The Board noted the very clear report by FG. JT asked for the table to be amended to include details of the current condition of the sites.</p>	RESUME FG
13. LiDAR	<p>It was agreed that there should be a total budget set for LiDAR to avoid the need for further discussion in-year.</p>	RESUME FG
14. Baseline Survey	<p>The Board complimented the LAS on their report which is very helpful and is already being used as a planning tool. JS is preparing a programme for the remainder of the HLS, to address the issues which the survey identified. It was agreed that a new line should be included in the Programme Register for this work if required.</p> <p>There was a discussion over the recommendations to improve the quality of RLR parcels. Reference was made, in discussion, to the 'Lavendar/Pasmore report on 'Trees of Landscape Importance'. Such trees make an important contribution to the character of the Forest. The IOS for non native trees states that there should be no more than 5% cover which allows for the retention of Trees of Landscape Importance, and it is not felt that they are a concern for the HLS. The Board did not consider it appropriate to adopt all the recommendations, but will give careful consideration to the action plan which JS is producing.</p>	RESUME JS/GH
15. Bird Survey	<p>The Board noted the report by Ian Barker (IB). CD to liaise with IB over dates for a meeting with the surveyors taking part in the nightjar survey in late May/June, and coordinate attendance by the Board.</p>	RESUME IB/CD
16. Cutting & Burning Study	<p>The Board thanked Barbara Smith for the excellent Summary Report on the comparison of the effect of managed burning and vegetation cutting on biodiversity in the New Forest which was felt to be</p>	RESUME

	extremely useful. Although the different methods are all legitimate techniques, the Board was reassured that the study has confirmed that burning provides the best ecological outcome. Both methods will continue to be used where appropriate. Although not covered in the report, it was suggested that 'swiping' may be less damaging to reptiles, but there is limited scientific evidence to support this.	
17. Open Forest GIS	Work is continuing.	RESUME
18. AOB	<p>AB informed the Board that 3 members of the NPA have left after completing 8 years with the Authority: Peter Frost; Vicky Myers; and Ted Johnson. Alex Neil, vice chancellor of Southampton University; Philip Marshall, formerly of the NT and now working for Broadlands Estate; and Judith Webb an environmental consultant (also a Forestry Commissioner), have been appointed as their successors. Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre has been appointed Vice Chairman following the departure of Vicky Myers.</p> <p>AB briefed the Board on the NPA statement on cycling events in the New Forest; copies of which have been passed to the FC and the Verderers. The NPA will continue to consider the impact of the changing nature of cycling events and their impact on the Forest, and will respond as appropriate. OV stated that road cycling events are not generally within the remit of the Verderers, as they are effectively outside their jurisdiction except where they impact on stock management such as at drifts; on these occasions the Verderers will liaise with the marshals to ensure that appropriate controls are in place where the events conflict. GF mentioned the role of the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) run by the NFDC which is also taking an interest in this.</p> <p>OV drew attention to concerns raised by Verderer Mr Anthony Pasmore over an apparent plan to provide a 'trail' funded by the HLS for WW2 archaeology at Ashley Walk. This would conflict with the 'tranquil' designation of the area. Although a walk is scheduled for 20 April, AB explained that there are no current plans for a marked trail or regular guided walks, and will provide formal confirmation of this to OV for the Verderers' Court. If any future plans for a trail are proposed, these will be processed through the normal channels.</p> <p>The board agreed that a new accountant, Princecroft Willis, should be appointed in place of BDO.</p>	All
	<p>The meeting concluded at 4.55 p.m. and the Board adjourned to the Verderers' Hall for the AGM</p> <p>The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 2 July 2013 at 9.00 a.m.</p> <p>List of future meeting dates (all meetings at 9.00 a.m.):</p> <p>3 October (Note: this is a Thursday) 8th January 2014</p>	

Dominic May

Dominic May
Official Verderer

15th May 2013

