



Official Verderer  
 Dominic May

27<sup>th</sup> March 2014

**MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 27 MARCH 2014**

<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
Mike Seddon	MS	Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest – Forestry Commission
<b>Non-Voting Members</b>		
Jenny Thomas	JT	Natural England (NE)
Graham Ferris	GF	Chairman – CDA
<b>In Attendance</b>		
Jane Smith	JS	Head of Planning & Environment - Forestry Commission
Leanne Sargeant	LS	VGS Administrator taking minutes
Colin Draper	CD	Outgoing VGS Manager
<b>Delegated Actions to</b>		
Lawrence Shaw	LSh	Heritage Mapping and Data Officer
Grace Herve	GH	HLS Administrative Officer
Ian Barker	IB	Ecologist
Hilary Makin	HM	Communications Manager

<b>Item</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action</b>
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	Item 9 – Capital works. All claims have been submitted except the rubble clearance at Beaulieu as the funding offered by Natural England for the 'Eyesore Removal' capital item would cover less than half of the actual cost. The remaining piles of rubble could be removed and paid for from our main budget as a landscape eyesore. Add 'Eyesore Removal - removal of piles of rubble at Beaulieu Aerodrome' into the terrestrial works in Programme Register.	RESUME  GH

	Item 15 – RPA Inspection. JT completed an assessment in January of the area of poaching, raised by the RPA inspection. This was submitted in Feb to the NE team and passed on to the RPA in March. Still awaiting a response.	
4. 2013/14 Programme Register	All items are complete as year ended 28 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2014.  Item 43: this was not delivered as awaiting felling licences and has been carried forward to 2014/15.	RESUME
5. Programme Registers 2014 - 2020	New Item to be added to 2014/15: removal of remainder of concrete posts along old railway line from gate 10 to Holmsley. The Board agreed it is a landscape eyesore and should be done.  Line 56 – should be £100,000 for year.  JT confirmed that to comply with EU rules, the payment dates will be changing. JT to find out when the payments will be made.  Actual underspend on the Register does not reflect the true year as we have not yet had AP2 payment (which will arrive in April). No news as to whether the RPA will hold our AP2 payment due to the cross compliance issues. JT to find out progress and timescales.  NE are pleased with the Programme Register and are not concerned at this stage about the planned 5% underspend which is a sensible contingency.  Sheet 2014/15 needs the historic aerial photos cost of £1500 adding.  2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20 sheets - Reserve for redundancy. Remove the additional line under the income section.  The Board recorded their thanks to the FC for producing the long term wetland & terrestrial plans.	RESUME GH  GH JT  JT    LSh  LS
6. Wetland & Terrestrial Restorations	Planning consultants have started on Latchmore EIA. A public information drop-in will be arranged about the scope for the Latchmore environmental impact assessment.  Four larger restorations are planned for work this year at Amberslade and Broomy, Sluffers, Harvestslade, and Pondhead. The same planning consultancy is starting work on these 4 schemes which don't need EIAs, but do need to go through planning. The planning committee dates to aim for are 17 <sup>th</sup> June or 15 <sup>th</sup> July, giving time for public consultation and if permission granted, for works to be carried out in late summer/early autumn.  Bracken litter clearance was not done as it was too wet during the winter.  FC has 21 projects for the HLS that it is currently progressing.  Queens Meadow road – work is in hand to understand how much water is flowing and find the best long term solution to stabilise the road.  A drain at Queens Meadow remains to be cleared as per the consultation site visit; this will be part of Queens Meadow repairs	RESUME           JS        JS

	and maintenance.	
7. HLS Staffing & Partner Resources for Delivery of Programmes	<p>The FC is recruiting a Contract Manager. A Works Supervisor post is also being recruited.</p> <p>The FC needs a 4x4 vehicle for their project staff to enable them to get out and visit sites on the Forest. This was agreed; the FC to decide whether to lease or buy and this will be a project cost.</p>	RESUME  MS/JS
8. Historic Environment	<p>The Board complimented the FC and volunteer staff on completing work on 12 SAM sites in 2013/14, with another site nearly completed.</p> <p>It was felt that the Hampton Ridge submarine pen looks stark with the vegetation removed, and it is hoped that it will recover quickly during the summer. OV stated that the partners must balance the Historic requirements with the Landscape requirements, and not make the New Forest uglier by simply following the Historic requirement, when the intention of the HLS is to improve the Landscape. AB to consult on the balance between Landscape and restoration of the Historic Environment with Sarah Kelly.</p> <p>Item 2.4 needs clarifying with the FC as to what work needs to be done at Holmsley Airfield.</p>	RESUME  AB  LSh
9. LiDAR	<p>Work has fallen behind due to the wet weather. The Board is however pleased with the good progress since LSh has been in post.</p> <p>Item 3.1 The Board approved the cost of £5,000 for LiDAR data storage as a one-off cost. Programme Register for 2019/20 needs the costs adding.</p> <p>Costs for the LiDAR exhibition were approved. Programme Register for 2014/15 and 2019/20 will need the exhibition costs adding.</p>	RESUME  LSh  LSh
10. Bird Surveys	<p>The Board has not received the draft report on the nightjar survey, which seems to have gone astray. It was agreed that IB should sign off the report if he is satisfied with it. The final report to be forwarded to the Board in due course.</p> <p>Logos on the report need to have the NE section as per the paper, along with the Verderers, FC, NFNPA. In discussion it was agreed that all final survey reports should include these logos.</p> <p>However, planning documents or associated papers should only have the FC logo, as the wetland restoration projects are delegated to the FC.</p> <p>Additional work is proposed within the 2014/15 survey assessing the success of breeding waders. The Board would like the survey to go further and look at the reasons for declines and successes. Proposal and costing to be emailed to Board members for approval.</p>	RESUME IB  ALL  FC  IB
11. Monitoring	A number of surveys are at the final draft stage, awaiting final reports.	RESUME
12. Measurement of wetland restoration	Alex Lovegrove's report raised some issues, particularly comments regarding the quality of grazing on burnt areas compared with areas treated by mechanical destruction of the	RESUME

	vegetation.GF to discuss with AL in preparation for the latters presentation to the next Board meeting.	GF
13. Communications	<p>A new HLS website is now online. It is looking very good. Thanks go to Hilary Makin and Paul Fleetwood for all their hard work. FC and Verderers staff are to be trained on how to update the website.</p> <p>Press releases were decided on the following subjects:  Ditching.  Wildlife Forum which included HLS feedback.  HLS AGM – pointing people to new website.  Latchmore drop-in session.</p>	RESUME LS/GH  JS HM LS JS
14. Health Check	The Board was complimented by JT on the annual Health Check, with only 3 items shown as amber compared to 11 red and 8 amber items for 2012.	RESUME
15. RPA Inspection	The Board is keen to know the cashflow implications of the findings of the recent RPA inspection, if it is decided that there has been a breach (link with item 5 on the agenda).	RESUME
16. VGS Update	VGS grazing payments were sent out at the end of February. OV noted that the Verderers have been quite strict in dealing with breaches of the scheme rules.	RESUME
17. AOB	<p>A report has been received from the CLA that the CAP reform may lead to some changes regarding dual use, to the effect that agri-environment funding (i.e. HLS) will not be able to be claimed by a different person to the one claiming SPS. The Verderers will now lobby this issue. LS to find who is the best person to contact. MS and AB should contact DEFRA direct.</p> <p>JT has been re-vamping our HLS prescriptions and these are currently being added to the agreement.</p>	RESUME  LS  MS/AB  JT
18. Confirm Dates for Future Meetings	<p>The meeting ended at 5.30pm</p> <p>List of future meeting dates:</p> <p>30 June 2014 at 11am  1 October 2014 at 9am</p>	

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