



**Verderers of the New Forest**  
**THE QUEEN'S HOUSE**  
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Official Verderer  
Lord Manners

11<sup>th</sup> January 2018

## MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Voting Members		
Lord Manners	OV	Official Verderer – Verderers of the New Forest (Chairman)
Alison Barnes	AB	Chief Executive – New Forest National Park Authority
Bruce Rothnie	DS	Deputy Surveyor – Forestry Commission
Non-Voting Members		
Jenny Thomas	JT	Lead Adviser New Forest - Natural England (NE)
Robert Stride	RS	CDA Representative
In Attendance		
Sonia Lorenzo-Martin	SLM	Head of Planning and Environment – Forestry Commission
Nick Wardlaw	NW	HLS Contract Manager
Tina Woodley	TW	VGS Administrator

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All present

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

OV is Chairman of the VGS Management Committee.

AB declared an interest in all Wetland Restoration projects because of the NPA's responsibilities as local planning authority.

RS is a member of the VGS and a committee member of the CDA.

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

RESUME

#### Anonymised Mobile phone Data

Lawrence Shaw the NPA Archaeologist gave the board a presentation on Anonymised phone data. The board asked LS to approach the phone companies and request a representative to address the board with a sample of the data available from the New Forest area.

Action LS

## FC Report

JT advised the board to start considering the compilation of an end of scheme report based on the annual health checks. AB to report to the next board with suggested content. NW asked TW to supply the draft 2017 health check report to the HLS team and JT as soon as possible.

Action AB  
Action TW

## PROGRAMME AND SUMMARY

RESUME

DS confirmed that following instruction from HMRC the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the year's figures now included VAT. DS to forward HMRC correspondence to OV & TW to keep on file.

Action DS

The board discussed the current underspend and the options of legitimate projects that could now be included in the HLS scheme. The haloing of ancient Oaks, Turkey Oak removal and removal of conifers from open heaths at certain locations were suggested as possible projects under the scheme. AB asked for the FC, in consultation with JT, to produce a list and quantification of possible projects for the board to consider.

RS commented that all these terrestrial works are supported by the CDA and they would add their suggestions to the proposal.

Action SLM

DS raised the risk that project staff whose contracts would end at the end of the scheme in February 2020 are likely to be considering alternative employment opportunities towards the end of the scheme. AB reiterated the urgency of having a future agreement and that she would ideally like to see a costed plan to illustrate to government what it really costs to run the Forest.

The board studied the 2018 programme and the OV expressed an interest in the Hen Harrier Monitoring. JT informed the board that there are very few left in the country now and that the New Forest offers the unique habitat that attracts over-wintering birds. The monitoring of this species requires onerous data collection over the winter months. AB asked if other data could be collected at the same time. JT will look into the possibility.

## FC UPDATE

RESUME

### Wetland Restoration

NW hopes for a good season on the wetland restoration projects.

NW has been engaging with the consultation groups on the projects and engaging with the PC's.

JT reported that the Freshwater and Wetland Restoration Strategy Group workshop has taken place and the follow up meeting will take place around February/March, this will eventually lead to a future restoration strategy for the whole of the New Forest SSSI. The OV commented that this would then be aligned to the HLS.

DS reported that the 2019 projects are now in the consultative planning stages. NW confirmed that the base line surveys are in progress.

DS asked the board to consider a contingency plan for the end of 2020 in case the final projects are running late.

### Terrestrial Restoration

NW reported on his summary. OV requested dates for the Lost Lawns Consultation days. NW to forward to OV.

Action NW

JT thought that during the process of ridge and furrow clearance there was a good opportunity to create new ponds. AB remarked that the LiDAR may show historical sites. OV also thought it would be worth looking at old photographs of the areas.

JT recommended that newly felled areas should be first to have the ridge and furrows removed. The board agreed to provide the funds to unlock the resources (e.g. Archaeological surveys) needed to get the project completed this season. NW commented that a framework of contractors will then be in place for future years.

#### Verge Restoration

NW reported on his summary. JT reminded the FC that all verge restoration works require NE consent before work commences.

#### Wetland Restoration Monitoring

NW reported on his summary. JT discussed the need to deliver a report on progress of the monitoring by the end of the agreement, demonstrating the change from beginning to end. DS felt that there is a need to be proactive on communicating the data collected through the monitoring. The board discussed the possibility of getting a consultancy to produce a progress report.

#### LAND ADVICE SERVICE WRITTEN UPDATE

RESUME

The board studied the report from the NFLAS. AB commented that the LAS are a small part of the scheme, but very worth the input. DS requested a report on the Young Commoners evening. RS will forward report to the DS.

Action RS

#### ENGAGEMENT AND INTERPRETATION OFFICER WRITTEN REPORT

RESUME

The report supplied was studied by the board. AB asked whether the board felt the engagement activity needs to be increased. NW commented that at present the HLS are spending a lot of time communicating with people. OV felt that early engagement especially with the PC's was very important. AB said she would organise an FC engagement with the NPA Quadrant Meetings.

Action AB

#### LiDAR WRITTEN REPORT

RESUME

The board studied the report on the ongoing work by the NPA team which continues to support the other HLS projects.

#### HIWWT WRITTEN UPDATE

RESUME

OV felt this project was a terrific example of changing people's opinions on non-native plants. The board agreed what a success this project has been. The DS asked JT if there was a current programme for the removal of Turkey oaks. JT replied currently not but that a programme could be reintroduced. RS informed the board that there had been a project under the LIFE scheme.

#### HLS EDUCATION ACCESS ANNUAL REPORT

DISCHARGE

The board studied the annual report supplied by the Education Access team. The board agreed it was a great success and is of huge benefit to the scheme.

#### NFPPG ANNUAL REPORT

DISCHARGE

The board studied the report on the activity and costs of the NFPPG during 2017.

## UPDATE ON MEETING WITH GUY THOMPSON

DISCHARGE

The OV reported on his meeting with Guy Thompson about the future of the HLS post Brexit.

## FUTURE NEW FOREST ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME UPDATE

RESUME

The board discussed the progress of securing a future stewardship scheme for the New Forest. OV asked JT to supply him with the details of the current CS scheme.

Action JT

## AOB

JT reported that the update on prescriptions was being completed and the revised agreement and new declaration for signature will be sent out shortly.

AB reminded the board that officials from DEFRA are scheduled to visit the forest on the 26<sup>th</sup> January.

The board agreed to change the date of the next board meeting to Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> April and the AGM to the 25<sup>th</sup> April.

TW to organise the AGM and to involve all the partners and associated projects in the revised AGM plan.

Action TW

Meeting closed at 12.50pm

## DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

11<sup>th</sup> April 2018 8.30am – Queens House Car park (Site Visit followed by Board Meeting)

25<sup>th</sup> April HLS Open Day 2pm followed by HLS AGM & Award presentations 5.30pm

Delegated Actions to		
Jenny Thomas	JT	Lead Advisor New Forest – Natural England (NE)
Tina Woodley	TW	Verderers Grazing Scheme Administrator
Bruce Rothnie	DS	Deputy Surveyor – Forestry Commission
Sonia Lorenzo-Martin	SLM	Head of Planning and Environment – Forestry Commission
Nick Wardlaw	NW	HLS Contract Manager – Forestry Commission
Robert Stride	RS	CDA Representative
Alison Barnes	AB	Chief Executive – New Forest National Park Authority
Lawrence Shaw	LS	Archaeologist – New Forest National Park Authority



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