



Verderers of the New Forest
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Official Verderer
Lord Manners

13th April 2018

MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 11th April 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)
Tony Hockley	TH	CDA Representative
In Attendance		
Nick Wardlaw	NW	HLS Contract Manager
Tina Woodley	TW	VGS Administrator

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Sonia Lorenzo-Martin - Head of Planning and Environment – Forestry Commission

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.

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

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESUME

Site Visits to Durhill & Holmsley Bog

Prior to the start of the meeting the board were taken on a site visit to view the recent stump removal project at Durhill and also the restoration works at Holmsley Bog. Lucy Andrews from the HLS team hosted the visit and explained the methods used and the results achieved. The board were very impressed with the standard of works carried out despite the recent very bad weather.

Anonymised Mobile phone Data

AB reported that as yet no mobile phone operating companies had come forward to offer a free sample of location data captured from mobile phones within the New

Forest, but that an opportunity may be available for funding through the charitable organisation NESTA, an innovation foundation that backs data/digital based projects (www.nesta.org.uk) AB will report any developments at the next board meeting.

Action AB

FC Report

AB presented the board with samples of existing National Park reports that provide examples of possible formats for an end of scheme report.

Fresh Water & Wetland Restoration Strategy Group

JT reported that the comments had been taken from the group's previous meeting and a draft strategy is now being put together and should be available in late May/June. AB asked JT to clarify how it would fit in with the current programme of works and asked that this be communicated. JT explained that the strategy would set out the vision for wetlands and will be an evolution from the existing strategy.

DS asked for details on Water Improvement Grants available from the EA/NE. The grant is EU funded through the RDPE to improve the water environment in England, the application window closes on the 11th May charities and land owners can bid for the grant but NE, EA and FC are not eligible. It was noted that a number of worthwhile projects could benefit from this source of funding. AB suggested NPA officers may be able to help as part of wider work looking at New Forest catchments and water quality. AB supplied the board with dates for the upcoming Quadrant meetings and asked the FC if they could attend. NW to liaise on availability.

Action NW

AB informed the board that the new NFNPA website was going live today and that it would allow a greater functionality for the HLS pages linked to the site, including opportunity to showcase species reports and news items.. The board were shown the latest edition of Parklife that featured a report on Grasshoppers. The board were impressed and JT commented that the inclusion of Parklife in the Advertiser was a very effective method of raising the public's awareness.

PROGRAMME AND SUMMARY

RESUME

The board studied the programme register. AB suggested it may be beneficial to have the project spend profiles set out in a more accessible, maybe graphic format and link this to a traffic light colour coding system to easily be able to view the status of projects and assist in management actions. AB offered the services of the NPA's finance officer to assist with the implementation. TW and NW accepted the offer of assistance. AB to arrange meeting.

Action AB

TW reported that the annual audited accounts were not available for this meeting as a result of the RPA payment that was due in December only arriving in the first week of April. The accounts are therefore still with the auditors.

TH asked if the maintenance agreements that had been requested by RS at an earlier meeting had been passed on. NW confirmed they had.. The board asked for clarification of this issue. Both JT and DS stressed the importance of continued monitoring. JT reported that she had asked the survey teams if any other bird species could be monitored during the Hen Harrier survey but the level of focussed observation required made wider observation of other species difficult.

FC UPDATE

RESUME

Wetland Restoration

NW reported on the progress of the wetland restorations.

Terrestrial Restoration

NW reported to the board on the terrestrial works that have taken place in the first quarter of this year.

Verge Restoration

NW reported that the Verge Restoration Officer continues to be very busy. AB suggested that a map highlighting areas of verge damage and subsequent restoration completed across all areas being targeted across the Forest would be a useful visual tool for the project. NW suggested using the new website as a tool for highlighting verge damage e.g. using Google earth images and/or displaying such a map. TH reported that a recent CDA presentment to the Verderers Court had led to the formation of a working group, co-ordinated by NFLAS, and involving the Verge Restoration Officer to develop a systematic approach to encroachments.

Wetland Restoration Monitoring

NW informed the board that monitoring work was continuing. AB commented that there may be opportunities for stories emerging from the individual species surveys. JT felt it was as important to report on the habitat condition rather than individual species as the overall ecology of the site for a range of species including those unique to the New Forest was more important. AB felt the project should use more stories to inspire people. DS commented that the monitoring reports needed to be shared with the strategy group and suggested the possibility of communication experts being commissioned to convey the data in more straightforward and non-technical language. AB & DS to look into the possibilities. OV requested that after the next evaluation period a report be written pulling together the results of the monitoring which should illustrate the health of the forest. JT to supply the narratives to support the restorations.

Action
AB&DS

Action JT

Concrete Removal

The board studied the desk based reports on the old airfields at Yew Tree Heath and Holmsley South supplied by Lawrence Shaw. OV suggested that the board relook at this project at the December board meeting and decide then if more reports are to be commissioned. It was agreed that the reports provided a good assessment of the features of most historical value and which other areas of concrete could be removed to restore back to the open forest.

The board had a discussion about the planned Broomy road works and asked NW to liaise with the HLS E&I officer over the publicity plan for the concrete removal mitigation work at Stoney Cross.

Action NW

LAND ADVICE SERVICE WRITTEN UPDATE

DISCHARGE

The board studied the report from the NFLAS. AB raised the issue of securing the longevity of the staff at the LAS as their combined skills were an asset to the scheme. The board hopes that the partnership will work together to ensure continued support for the NFLAS.

HIWWT WRITTEN UPDATE

DISCHARGE

The board studied the report supplied and are looking forward to meeting many of the dedicated volunteers at the upcoming AGM.

FUTURE NEW FOREST ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME UPDATE

RESUME

The board discussed the progress of securing a future stewardship scheme for the New Forest. JT ran through the current options suggested and highlighted the pros and cons for each option. TH reported that, in addition to the New Forest representation to DEFRA to ensure that the New Forest does not fall out of an agri-

environmental agreement during the agricultural transition from the CAP, similar representations were being made by the Foundation for Common Land on commons more generally. AB reported that pilot schemes have been put forward from other National Parks but the possible outcomes are still dependant on the transition decisions.

HLS HEALTH CHECK

DISCHARGE

JT ran through the progress and performance objectives of the HLS projects. The Ancient & Veteran Tree haloing was discussed. AB commented that the NPA had records of Ancient Trees and would make sure FC had access to the records. Although limited work has been delivered under the HLS project to date, DS reported that FC do continue to undertake such work as part of standard woodland management.

HLS PRESCRIPTION REVIEW

RESUME

JT reported that the prescription review was delayed due to dealing with priority issues with the RPA remapping and the change in officers. JT will report again at the July board meeting. AB suggested that a letter be sent requesting a single and consistent contact at the RPA to assist the Forest for future years; this had been available in the past and proved helpful in keeping records maintained.

AOB

TH requested an update on grazing management. The board discussed the recent wet winter and the resulting poaching outside some commoners' holdings and the options currently available to the partners to deal with any problems.

TW informed the board of the plans and arrangements for the upcoming Open Afternoon and AGM on the 25th April. The board put forward additions to the invite list for TW to action.

Action TW

TW to propose dates for the next three HLS board meeting and circulate amongst the board for availability.

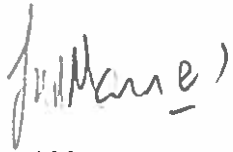
Action TW

Meeting closed at 1.45pm

DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

25th 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
Nick Wardlaw	NW	HLS Contract Manager – Forestry Commission
Alison Barnes	AB	Chief Executive – New Forest National Park Authority



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