



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

5<sup>th</sup> October 2018

## MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018

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

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies – 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.

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

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

RESUME

#### Forest Farming Group Update

The OV reported attending a meeting with Robert Deane. Robert Stride and AB were also present. At this meeting Mr Deane was commissioned to produce a full report on natural capital in the New Forest. The board discussed the importance of local natural capital and the benefits and potential outcomes of future investment in the New Forest. The board also discussed how this report will give an opportunity to showcase why the New Forest's biodiversity is so unique and what future investment is needed to maintain it.

### HLS Staff Retention

DS confirmed that the FC employee contracts had an option to offer an incentive to employees to remain until the end of the project. AB felt this offer needed to be extended to all HLS employees. DS reminded the board that those employees that had been in post for the agreed period would be entitled to redundancy payments if the scheme ended.

### Timber Extraction

JT confirmed the FC is able to invoice the HLS for the extraction of timber from HLS work sites.

### HLS End of Scheme Reports

TW & NW have discussed the options for the production of an end of scheme celebration in the form of a non-technical publication. TW & NW to scope out ideas on format with MS.

Action  
TW,NW &  
MS

### PROGRAMME AND SUMMARY

RESUME

The 2018 & 2019 programme summary was examined. TW reported she is being assisted by the NPA's finance team to modernise the programme summary. AB to follow up on the progress.

Action AB

AB requested the SAM's budget be re reinstated as some of the newly recorded features are in need of work. NW has requested a list of requirements from LS. JT commented that any works would need to be over and above the statutory responsibility of the FC as landowners. NW, JT & LS to meet and discuss.

Action  
NW,JT & LS

TH asked for confirmation that the VGS LU changes did not change the overall budget for the VGS and could the VGS still support the microchipping of ponies sold through the Beaulieu Road Sales following the recent change in legislation. TW confirmed the VGS pot remained the same and that she would work closely with the Livestock Society and the breed society to come up with options to comply with the new legislation.

TW informed the board that the RPA have not yet released a payment schedule for 2018/19 but hope it will be finalised by the end of October. TW to inform DS as soon as the payment schedule is available.

Action TW

### FC UPDATE

RESUME

### Wetland Restoration

The board studied the report supplied. NW reported it had been a very busy summer, testament to both the HLS team and the weather being ideal for Wetland Restoration works. The Pondhead project exceeded expected budget due to repeat set up costs and extra materials. The works at Pondhead are finished for this season and the year-long monitoring period as agreed in the planning consent has now commenced.

Wootton 2 spend was also higher than expected due to extra pumps being needed because of high flows. Work has now finished for the season and positive reports have been noted from neighbouring Parish Councils.

Works scheduled for Cunniger Bottom are now due to take place in 2019.

NW reported that the goal post type structures that had been left in-situ on sites by the contractors are all due to be removed this week.

### Terrestrial Restoration

SLM updated the board on the terrestrial works that have taken place this summer. The preparatory works for the Ridge and Furrow projects are well underway and the

Rhododendron management project has now covered the entirety of the open forest at least once.

#### Verge Restoration

The Verge Restoration Officer has spent a lot of time talking to the public and Parish Councils on the planned verge works which has proven to be a great investment. East Boldre Parish Council has agreed for the project in their village to be completed over this winter. The board studied the report detailing the other verge restoration projects worked on this summer. TH commented on the apparent need to communicate better on verge restoration, learning from the public response to the changes at Denny Wood.

#### Wetland Restoration Monitoring

NW informed the board that Emma Tomlin has just joined the HLS team as Monitoring Officer and that she is keen to take the monitoring project to the next level. AB asked for feedback of the species surveys to be used as take home messages for the HLS. JT reported that 2 national databases are gathering evidence on river and wetland restorations and that the New forest is ahead in its monitoring work. The OV asked for a more detailed monitoring report. NW replied that he is working with MS to have a report ready for the next board meeting highlighting the monitoring results.

Action NW  
& MS

#### Concrete Removal

TW presented the board with a printed report on the built heritage at Beaulieu Heath that she had received from LS. JT requested an electronic copy. JT reported to the board that the Broomy Lane permission was taking longer to process due to a change of legislation in the habitat regulations. HCC's application now has to go through appropriate assessment. JT is scheduled to speak to the HCC ecologist later today.

Action TW

#### LAND ADVICE SERVICE WRITTEN UPDATE

The board studied the written update from the NFLAS. AB commented that their work is still in great demand and that they are important members of the HLS team and their expertise will be needed especially with the imminent change in agri -environmental schemes.

RESUME

#### ENGAGEMENT AND INTERPRETATION OFFICER WRITTEN UPDATE

The report was studied and NW answered queries from the board. NW reported the success of the wetland model at the New Forest Show, commenting that it was a good pilot and prompted some good discussions. He believed they had made a difference to the people they had spoken to, especially the children. NW asked the board to support the team in their entry to the UK Rivers Prize this Autumn. The board were delighted to back their entry. NW raised a request from MS to use some of his E&I budget to run a social media campaign highlighting verge restoration. The board were in agreement for this use of funds.

RESUME

#### HIWWT WRITTEN UPDATE

The board studied the written report and commented how busy and dedicated the HIWWT team were in their quest against invasive non-native plants.

RESUME

RESUME

#### FUTURE NEW FOREST ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME UPDATE

JT reported that no confirmed decisions have been released with regards to future schemes. The most likely appears to be a rollover of the HLS whilst the UK is in transition as it appears to be supported by all bodies including DEFRA and the EU. This proposal only applies to 2019 at the moment and could apply to Wellow and

National Trust HLS as their schemes run out in 2019. The hope is this will get ministerial sign-off during October. The alternative option would be a Countryside Stewardship agreement which has very different requirements for entry and no negotiated rate option. JT made the offer for a representative from the NE CS team to attend the January board meeting to help explain the CS scheme more fully. OV wanted to know when we would need to apply for CS and asked for it to be added as an agenda item in January. The board felt the need to liaise with HLS staff as soon as more is known on the likelihood of a HLS rollover.

Action TW

## AOB

### HLS Team Structure

SLM requested a change in the staff structure within the HLS team. The board agreed to this strategy as if the HLS rollover option was adopted the projects would need dedicated staff. DS commented that some works were critical. JT agreed that some peat rich areas were quickly being lost and would need emergency works to save them and that some locations are in controversial areas. AB felt a site based approach was logical as it is essential to protect declining SSSI's. JT to produce a red list of sites needing urgent attention.

Action JT

### Julian Glover Visit to the New Forest

AB discussed with the board the planned visit to the New Forest by Julian Glover. He is only here for two days and has a lot to fit into his timetable. AB asked if any member of the board had anything they wanted to be added to his visit. Mr Glover is due to take tea in the Verderers Hall on Thursday afternoon. AB will confirm the rest of his timetable when it is finalised.

Meeting closed at 11.30am.

## DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019 – 9am at The Queens House

Delegated Actions to		
Jenny Thomas	JT	Lead Advisor New Forest – Natural England (NE)
Alison Barnes	AB	Chief Executive – New Forest National Park Authority
Tina Woodley	TW	Verderers Grazing Scheme Administrator
Nick Wardlaw	NW	HLS Contract Manager – Forestry Commission
Matt Stroud	MS	HLS Engagement and Interpretation Officer
Lawrence Shaw	LS	HLS Archaeologist

*Lord Manners*  
*28/11/18*

Lord Manners  
Official Verderer

