



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

11<sup>th</sup> April 2019

## MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019

<b>Voting Members</b>		
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
<b>Non-Voting Members</b>		
Robert Stride	RS	CDA Representative
Jenny Thomas	JT	Lead Adviser New Forest - Natural England (NE)
<b>In Attendance</b>		
Julie Mellin-Stubbs	JMS	New Forest Land Advice Service
Tina Woodley	TW	VGS Administrator
Nick Wardlaw	NW	HLS Contract Manager – Forestry Commission

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies from Tony Hockley – Robert Stride attended in his place  
Apologies from Sonia Lorenzo Martin

### 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 Vice Chairman of the CDA.

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

RESUME

#### Julian Glover Visit to the New Forest

AB reported that Julian Glover has finished his visits to the National Parks and we now await his report.

### Future New Forest Environmental Stewardship Scheme Update

The board had received positive responses from the local MPs after requesting they lobby for an amendment to the Agriculture Bill to include 'landscape' under the list of defined 'public goods'.

### HLS Team Structure

A token of the boards' appreciation had been sent to Sarah Oakley to thank her for all her hard work and dedication to the wetland restoration projects.

### PROGRAMME AND SUMMARY

The programme summary was reviewed for the first quarter of 2019 and the projections for 2020 studied. NW reported that the first part of the year had less spend as the majority of works are carried out over the Summer period. It was noted that for 2020 the Ridge and Furrows project would have its own serial on the PR rather than be included in the open Habitat serial. The planned sites have been surveyed for archaeological recording and the works are due to start in the Autumn. BR requested that NW supply regular updates on projected spend to the board as the end of the scheme approaches.

Action NW

### HEALTHCHECK

The board studied the annual health-check. JT had added very positive feedback to the report stating the HLS projects were delivering fantastic results out on the forest.

DISCHARGE

### FC UPDATE

RESUME

### Wetland Restoration

NW reported that all sites worked last year are being visited to assess for any repairs or maintenance, as well as a number from the previous years. Sites for this year are due to be worked over the summer period.

### Terrestrial Restoration

Terrestrial works carried out over this quarter have included clearance of natural regeneration on Open Habitats including successful scrub clearance at Linford Bottom. Rhododendron cut and burn and Ridge and Furrow Stump shearing.

### Verge Restoration

The Verge Restoration Officer has completed works at a number of sites already this year with other projects underway including Broomy Plain, Burley and East Boldre. HCC have completed their input into the Broomy Plain verge restoration. The project is partially complete and HCC is awaiting the results of a safety audit report.

### Wetland Restoration Monitoring

NW informed the board that the HLS team are currently preparing the wetland restoration monitoring delivery for the 2019 survey season to ensure it delivers on benchmark sites and establishes long term monitoring protocols. JT commented that monitoring results are important even if they indicate that it is too early to draw any conclusions. A combination of repeatable pre-survey, post –survey, 5 year and 10 year surveys will be needed to create an accurate picture and that the benchmark sites are important for comparison to the worked sites. DS felt it was important to get the monitoring results out in the public domain in a clear and understandable format. DS offered the FE communications team to assist in producing the reports. AB requested that the reports be agreed with all partners before public release.

NW explained the tables and graphs included in the fish report. The board found it very informative and JMS noted that many years of sampling would be needed to see patterns as well as comparing to national data and environmental influences. DS felt the fixed-point photography data was an excellent way of spreading positive results as it shows an almost instant difference to the sites.

#### LAND ADVICE SERVICE WRITTEN UPDATE

RESUME

JMS gave the board a summary of her 2019 progress report. The issue was raised of finding ways to engage with a greater number of commoners. JMS reported that the LAS advisors were always very busy and that they provided an important service to those commoners that already consult them. It was felt that the LAS play an important part in linking the open forest with privately owned land.

#### ENGAGEMENT -AND INTERPRETATION OFFICER WRITTEN UPDATE

RESUME

The board studied the final report from the HLS E&I officer. MS has taken a new posting and his role is being advertised. Hilary Makin will be covering in the interim and has already been working with TW and Esta Mion on the plans for the 2019 HLS Celebration and the publicity for the HLS scheme being a finalist for the River Restoration Prize.

#### HIWWT WRITTEN UPDATE

RESUME

The board examined the report that outlines the relevant activities of the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project from the last quarter. Volunteers have undertaken practical work on the Open Forest controlling Himalayan Balsam and Pitcher Plants. Contractors have also been applying treatments in the control of Parrots Feather, Bog Arum, American Skunk Cabbage, Montbretia, Iris laevigata, Japanese Knotwood, Cotoneaster, Golden Club, Yellow Azela, Pickerel Weed and Gautheria. The board are looking forward to welcoming and thanking these volunteers at the HLS Celebration in May.

#### FUTURE NEW FOREST ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME UPDATE

RESUME

JT reported that there is still no formal position adopted for rollover of HLS agreements expiring in 2020 although the board hope to hear by May, last year confirmation was not received until August. NE are working closely with DEFRA and the RPA but the New Forest HLS agreement must meet the criteria to be offered an extension. AB requested the details of the NE contact who directly approaches the RPA. JT to supply AB the contact details.

Action JT

The board discussed the actions needed if a rollover was not agreed. The option available currently would be to apply to join the CS scheme. This has many difficulties in trying to apply it to the New Forest. The first step would be to commission a PA2 feasibility study from a specialist contractor and this could take up to a year to complete. JMS informed the board that other options are being looked at to facilitate an interim agreement until the potential launch of 2024 ELMS Schemes.

#### AOB

RESUME

#### 2019- A Year of Celebration

TW updated the board on the plans for the upcoming HLS Celebration.

#### Replacement Fallen Stock Vehicle

The board considered an application from the New Forest Fox Hounds for a grant to replace the current Fallen Stock Vehicle (owned by the HLS and leased to the NFH). The current vehicle is coming to the end of its useful economic life and urgently needs

replacing. The board did not feel they could approve a grant of this size with only one year of the HLS left to run and were also concerned that the grant would be subsidising a business. The recommendation is for the Hunt to apply for a VGS small grant to assist towards a replacement vehicle.

Action  
TW/OV

#### HLS Assets

JT supplied the board with extract 6.9 from the New Forest HLS MOA that stated the procedure regarding disposal assets owned by an HLS agreement.

#### Commoning Census

The board considered a request from Tony Hockley to fund another Commoners Census. The OV felt that this need not be repeated any sooner than every 10 years; JT was concerned that it would not fall under the objectives of the current agreement.

Action TW

Meeting closed at 12.40pm.

#### DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 AGM – 6pm

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019 – 9am

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019 – 9am

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020 – 9am

Delegated Actions to		
Tina Woodley	TW	Verderers Grazing Scheme Administrator
Nick Wardlaw	NW	HLS Contract Manager – Forestry Commission
Jenny Thomas	JT	Lead Adviser New Forest - Natural England (NE)

*Jul Manners*  
26/6/19

Lord Manners  
Official Verderer