



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

24<sup>th</sup> January 2020

## MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020

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

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Nick Wardlaw - HLS Contract Manager – Forestry England

Nick Wardlaw has recently moved to a position on the Recreation Team within Forestry England and will no longer be attending HLS board meetings. The board would like to extend their gratitude for the years of hard work and commitment to the HLS Scheme and wish him well in his new post.

### 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

#### Spider Survey

OV requested an update on the publication of the Spider survey. SLM agreed to send Action SLM copy of report once it has been finalised.

### Programme of Works for 2020

The board was supplied with a draft programme of works that could be delivered in 2020 if a rollover was agreed.

### Wetland Restoration Monitoring

The E & I Officer is working on an end of project publication with photos and simple messages explaining the monitoring done as part of the project. This will be ready by April.

FE are reviewing the data that has been collected and a monitoring report will be available by the end of March after the upcoming meeting of the Freshwater and Wetland Restoration Forum.

### Celebrating 10 years

AB supplied the board with copies of the 12-page leaflet celebrating the many successful projects that the HLS has helped fund over the past 10 years. The board members were impressed with the finished design. These leaflets have been given out to the public by the travelling HLS Rangers and include a pledge from the public to help fulfil the aims of the HLS. NPA will supply stocks of these leaflets to the partner organisations. AB requested feedback on the numbers required.

### PROGRAMME AND SUMMARY

The board studied the current programme register for the end of 2019 and the projected programme of projects for 2020 if this was to be the end of the agreement. As the decision has not yet been received on the potential roll-over of the current HLS scheme for 2020, the board agreed not to make any decisions regarding any potential underspend that may exist at the end of the scheme until formal notice has been received.

SLM noted that some amendments need to be made to the projected 2020 programme. JT requested that Holly Pollarding be added to the programme.

The change in current legislation regarding the use of Asulox for spraying of bracken will require alternative methods of control.

RESUME

Action SLM

### FE UPDATE

The board studied the report supplied by FE for the Autumn/Winter 2019 period.

### Wetland Restoration

All repairs at Shirley Holms Mire were completed and all restoration work at Pondhead has also been completed.

### Terrestrial Restoration

SLM reported that the ridge and furrow work is well underway and proving successful. With 3 contractors available the project is able to cover more area and compare methods. The board requested a site visit before the April meeting. TW to arrange with SLM. JT invited the HLS partners to attend a NE hosted meeting in February covering climate change and carbon release. AB commented that the NFNPA have a paper going out to their members recommending that the NFNPA commit to develop plans with partners to address climate and nature emergencies. JT noted that it is a great opportunity to highlight how important the restored mires are for absorbing carbon.

TW & SLM

DS informed the board that the climate expert from Forest Research, Mark Broadmeadow is addressing the Consultative panel on the evening of 5<sup>th</sup> March. He

is also addressing Forestry England staff in the same afternoon and any Board organisation staff are welcome to attend – details to follow. Rhododendron management is ongoing and the Lost Lawns projects at Apsey Shade, Linford Bottom and Anses Wood have now been completed.

#### Verge Restoration

The Verge Restoration Officer has completed works in over a dozen sites and a further 20 plus sites are ongoing. Broomy Plain works are due to recommence shortly implementing the agreed specifications.

#### Wetland Restoration Monitoring

JT informed the board that the bird surveys for 2019 have not been published due to awaiting feedback from NE.

SLM requested an update on the Southern Damsel Fly survey. JT had met with contractors in October and agreed the format. SLM to follow up and report back to the board.

Action SLM

DS reported that he had been contacted by Southampton University. They have requested suggestions for possible projects or topics that they could develop as research bids.

#### ENGAGEMENT AND INTERPRETATION OFFICER WRITTEN UPDATE

RESUME

The board studied the report from the E & I Officer. AB shared with the board the outstanding winning and runners up photographs from the Micro Photography Competition. The competition received a good number of high-quality entries.

OV and DS requested a preview of the Wetland Videos that are planned for release in conjunction with World Wetlands Day.

Action AB

OV and JT requested TW forward the link to the HLS Commoning videos.

Action TW

#### HIWWT WRITTEN UPDATE

RESUME

The report from the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project was studied by the board. It was noted the astonishing amount of work and effort that is undertaken by the Coordinator and her team of volunteers. The board see this project as a massive success and great value for money.

#### NFLAS WRITTEN UPDATE

RESUME

The report from the NFLAS was studied. The board commented on the NFLAS's success in securing previously unutilised land belonging to Exxon and making it available as back up grazing to commoners. AB requested the board consider future funding of the successful mentorship scheme that has previously been running under the OPOF project. The board felt it was a project worth consideration if a rollover was agreed.

#### LIDAR WRITTEN UPDATE

RESUME

The LiDAR zoomable maps have now been moved to a new server. Work has been completed to make them accessible again on the NPA website and to improve the user experience. OV to be notified when complete.

Action AB

#### FUTURE NEW FOREST ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME UPDATE

RESUME

JT confirmed with the board that NE had recommended to the RPA in December that the New Forest HLS should be rolled over for 2020/21. The decision is now with the RPA. It is believed that the RPA will contact the Verderers directly with their decision. TW to notify the board immediately of the result. SLM spoke about the difficulty in retaining staff and not being able to recruit new staff to work on the HLS projects and

how incredibly difficult it is to plan a season of works. Waiting for a decision has an impact on securing contractors for the upcoming season unless the roll over is confirmed. The board discussed the issue of staff retention after the official scheme end date. It was agreed to cover salaries for an additional two months after the scheme end in order to complete outstanding matters and to review at the next meeting if no roll over has been agreed.

#### ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUEST FROM HIWWT

RESUME

As the board already feel this project has achieved so many positive actions during the 10 years of the HLS scheme, they agreed to fund the request for an additional £2000 to their 2019 annual grant. TW to inform CC

Action TW

#### REVIEW OF VGS GRANT BUDGETS

RESUME

The board received a request from the VGS Committee to increase the 2019 budget for the VGS small grant scheme. The project had been well subscribed in its final year and the requests exceeded the annual budget. After studying the cumulative spend by commoners towards improvement and development of their animal management systems and infrastructure the board agreed to the request. TW to inform the committee.

Action TW

#### AOB

##### Feeding Areas

The CDA requested that a representative from the CDA accompany NE, FE and the VGS Administrator on its annual feeding area inspection. TW to contact the CDA when a date has been arranged and for confirmation as to who will attend.

Action TW

##### Educational Access Annual Report

The board studied the annual report from the Educational Access team. In 2019 the HLS funding enabled 2,311 pupils from 41 schools to visit the New Forest National Park to learn about its special qualities. It was noted that for many schools the HLS funding makes the difference between being able to visit and not experiencing the Forest at all. The board also extended their best wishes to Sue Palma on her retirement and thanked her for all her hard work in supporting the HLS.

##### HLS AGM

The date of the HLS AGM was agreed as 6pm Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020. The location to be Minstead Village Hall and the format to be as last year. TW to book the hall and liaise with the HLS Contributors.

Action TW

##### Cycle Data Counters

JT requested information on the data received from the cycle counters that were installed at the beginning of the scheme. DS to investigate, and report at next Board meeting.

##### Retention of Fencing under FDP

DS asked the board to consider future HLS funding for fencing that is essential to stock management once the fence is no longer required to exclude stock from inclosures as planned within the Forest Design Plan. The board will consider this further if a rollover is agreed.

Action DS

Consultation on Impact to Dorset Heathland

OV asked the board if a response was needed to the consultation on the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document, which runs until the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 FE & NPA have drafted responses and will send copies to OV. Action SLM & DS

Meeting closed at 12.45pm

DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday April 8<sup>th</sup> – 8.30pm Site meeting followed by meeting in Library

Wednesday June 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6pm – Minstead Village Hall – AGM

Wednesday July 8<sup>th</sup> – 9am – Library

Wednesday October 7<sup>th</sup> – 9am - Annexe

Delegated Actions to		
Bruce Rothnie	DS	Deputy Surveyor – Forestry England
Tina Woodley	TW	VGS Administrator
Sonia Lorenzo Martín	SLM	Head of Planning and Environment – Forestry England
Alison Barnes	AB	Chief Executive – New Forest National Park Authority

*Jul Manners*  
19/2/2020

Lord Manners  
Official Verderer

