

9th July 2010

Dean Forest to wit

Before

At a Special Court of Attachment
of our Sovereign Lady the Queen at
The Speech House on the ninth
day of July in the Fifty Eighth year
of the reign of our Lady Queen Elizabeth
the Second by the Grace of God , etc in
the year of our Lord Two Thousand and Ten
A.M.R. Watts Esq., O.B.E., J.P,
R.W. Jenkins Esq., J.P.
Ray Wright, Esq.
M.V. Bent Esq.

K.G.Stannard Esq., Deputy Surveyor, Forestry
Commission
R.W. Davies Esq., F.R.I.C.S., Land Agent,
Forestry Commission

K. P. Griffin B.A. Solicitor, Steward

Prior to the commencement of the Court, the Senior Verderer welcomed the new Deputy Surveyor and expressed the best wishes of the Verderers to him in his demanding new post.

APOLOGIES

None.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Court held on the 16th April 2010 were approved after slight amendment and signed.

MATTERS ARISING

(1) Election of a Verderer

The Steward advised he would be able to produce a draft Procedure for Election at the next Court.

(2) Speech House

Mr Davies advised that the new tenants wished to change the beams from black to brown. This was agreed. He added that the tenants continue to have problems with sheep around the Hotel. He also confirmed he would work closely with the Commission's Surveyor to ensure the Court's dignity was upheld and maintained.

(3) Cannop

Mr Davies advised that details of the planning application for the bridge should be available at the next Court.

(4) High Sheriff

The Steward confirmed that Mr Evans and his wife will attend the next Court.

MINERALS

Mr Davies reported that the micro-hydro system planned at Cannop Ponds had been delayed due to problems with compliance with Environment Agency requirements.

He added that there is to be a new assignee of the lease for the Birch Hill quarry and new investment in the enterprise.

COMMONING

The Deputy Surveyor reported that the issue of unmarked sheep had been discussed at the Liaison Group meeting and assurances had been given by the Commoners Association that all sheep will be clearly marked after shearing. He added that unmarked sheep found can be lifted by the Commission and impounded.

He also reported there had been 106 complaints received by the Commission since the last Court, mostly concerning faeces and in the southern area of the Forest. There had been 3 reports of dead sheep. He added that the reports had been investigated, but no dead sheep or faeces had been found.

Mr Jenkins reported that he had been replaced as Chairman of the Liaison Group by Senior Master Turner. He added that the recent meetings had been very positive and the members had fully cooperated with each other.

The Deputy Surveyor commented that he had only been in the post for a short time but had found no sheep "problem", only anti-social behaviour by two sheep owners (who were no longer members of the Commoners Association). He added that the Commoners Association had asked the Police to resolve these issues.

Mr Davies commented that the Hotel tenant would like to construct a fence to the front of the building to prevent sheep from staying near the Hotel. Mr Jenkins commented that chemicals

should be used to keep them away, but Mr Davies replied that this had been tried but had not worked.

DEER

The Deputy Surveyor advised that the deer management plan for the year had been completed and some 400 deer had been culled.

He reported that two muntjac had been shot. He added that all necessary action would be taken to ensure the species does not become established in the area.

BOAR AND FERAL PIGS

The Court heard 62 animals had been culled in the 2009-10 financial year in accordance with the management strategy to keep the population to 90 or under. He added that a further 9 animals had been killed to the end of June, but a significant cull is required as the population has doubled in two years to more than 200.

The Deputy Surveyor added that culling itself is difficult as the animals keep to thick vegetation. The traps used are heavy and require four persons to carry them, but have been used successfully, especially with problem animals. Contraceptive methods are also being investigated.

The Court was advised that the Worcester University research should be available in a few months, although the Commission had not been asked for any input.

Mr Bent asked about the proposals to deal with the complaints in the Ruardean area and was advised that the Rangers will visit the area and set up traps.

Mr Wright asked about TB and was advised this had been found in one animal but this should not be a matter of great concern.

CINDERFORD REGENERATION FUNDS

Mr Davies advised that the Area Action Plan is in course of preparation but funding may prove very difficult in the present economic conditions.

He added that Northern United had been sold to the Home and Communities Agency.

DEPUTY SURVEYOR'S REPORT

(1) Diseases

The Court heard that the larch in Devon and Cornwall and in Margam in South Wales are badly affected by *Phytophthora Valorum* and are being removed. In response to an enquiry from Mr Wright, the Deputy Surveyor advised that the cause of the disease is believed to be infected rhododendron stock introduced from Asia to Cornwall

With regard to Oak, the Court was advised that Chronic Oak Decline is present in the Dean. This causes growth problems but does not kill the tree. The real concern is Acute Oak Decline, a form of Phytopthera that will kill trees. The symptoms involve a black “bleeding” through the bark.

A further problem involves Red Band Needle Blight that is now rampant throughout the country and affects all Corsican Pine. This species will no longer be planted and is to be replaced by Douglas Fir, Chestnut and Oak in the future.

(2) Sculpture Trail

A planning application has been made for new sculptures and funding is available to enable work to be commenced in the Autumn.

(3) Forest Holidays

The development is progressing well and should be fully open in the Autumn, creating new employment opportunities.

(4) Public Spending

The financial cuts will affect the Commission including freezes on pay, recruitment and public relations expenditure. The woodland disposals programme has increased but does not affect the Forest itself.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Sale of Land in the Forest

Mr Wright expressed concern about the sale of Forest waste for development. He was advised the Commission had made two planning applications to raise revenue and hoped to obtain exchange land if possible.

Newent Rotary Club

The Court heard that the Steward’s presentation to the club had been very well received.

Rob Guest’s Tree

It was noted that no date had yet been set for the naming ceremony.

Statutory Forest Boundary

Details of the walk around the Forest boundary were provided, together with a plan of the route, totalling between 55 and 60 miles.

DATES OF NEXT TWO COURT SITTINGS

The date for the next Court will be Friday the 22nd October 2010. The following Court date will be the 14th January 2011.

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Verderers

Deputy Surveyor
Forestry Commission

Steward