

8<sup>th</sup> July 2011

Dean Forest to wit

At a Special Court of Attachment  
of our Sovereign Lady the Queen at  
The Speech House on the Fifteenth  
day of April in the Fifty Ninth 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  
Eleven

Before

R.W. Jenkins Esq., J.P.  
Ray Wright, Esq.  
M.V. Bent Esq.

K.G.Stannard Esq., Deputy Surveyor,  
ForestryCommission  
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 Mark Harper, M.P. and thanked him for attending.

## **APOLOGIES**

None.

## **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Court held on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2011 were approved and signed.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

### **(1) Verderers Website**

The Steward confirmed that he had been able to access the site to upload the Minutes.

## **MINERALS**

Mr Davies reported that the micro-hydro system at Cannop Ponds was fully operational but had not been formally opened.

The Court heard that the Stowfield Quarry lease will give an extra 12 to 14 year life to the quarry. Mr Davies commented that the planning consent had some 62 conditions attached.

He added that the Deputy Gaveler's post had now been advertised nationally and in fact is the only Civil Service post to be openly advertised in view of the recruitment freeze, as it requires a qualified mining engineer.

## **COMMONING**

The Deputy Surveyor reported that there had been a surge in the number of complaints received by the Commission since the last Court in relation to problems in Bream and Yorkley. The Court heard that a course of action had been agreed to tackle the continuing issues in Bream and that the Commoners Association would approach the sheep owner responsible for the Yorkley problem and try to persuade him to move the sheep out of the community and to graze responsibly.

The Deputy Surveyor also advised that the conservation grazing paper had been well received and that the Sheep Liaison Group and Dean Forest Forum had been very supportive.

With regard to the question of cattle grazing at Lydbrook, the Court heard this was a breach of the bye laws and Trading Standards are involved in the case. The cattle must be moved or serious action will be taken.

## **DEER**

The Deputy Surveyor advised there was nothing to report on this matter

## **BOAR AND FERAL PIGS**

The Court was advised that the final draft of the management plan is available to all groups and also in electronic format. The Deputy Surveyor commented that the draft is to be finalised and brought to the next Court for approval. He added there had been little adverse comment, but feedback was awaited.

He reported that the new cage and corral traps are ready to be deployed but there are animal welfare issues of the possibility of killing an animal in the presence of another of the same species.

It was noted that excellent progress had been made in the management programme, with some 52 animals culled since the 1<sup>st</sup> April.

Mr Bent commented that the damage in the Ruardean area had diminished and the local population is very pleased.

Mr Harper advised the Court that he had received numerous letters and communications from local residents demanding action to manage the boar.

The Deputy Surveyor also commented that there is a very low incidence of TB in boar.

## **CINDERFORD REGENERATION**

Mr Davies advised the Court that the Action Plan is almost complete.

He added that a decision is awaited about the College move to the Northern Quarter.

He reminded the Court that the scheme will involve major development on Commission land, for which exchange land will be required and it is possible this will involve a return of the Linear Park to Commission ownership..

## **DEPUTY SURVEYOR'S REPORT**

### **(1) Visits**

The Court heard there had been visits to the Dean by Chinese Government officials and that over 120 delegates had attended a Royal Forestry Society meeting at Speech House.

### **(2) Phytophthora Ramorum**

The Court was advised that a tree on Tidenham Chase is to be felled and checked for the disease. The Deputy Surveyor added that it is possible all larch will have to be removed from the Dean.

### **(3) Red Band Needle Blight**

The Deputy Surveyor advised the Court that an infection in Douglas Fir had been found to be Swiss Band Needle Blight and not Red Band. This is not a problem.

### **(4) Verderers Trail**

The Police are investigating damage to the Trail caused by scrambling bikes. It is hoped the repairs required will not delay the opening of the Trail.

### **(5) New Bridge at Cannop**

The Court heard work has been delayed due to making arrangements with the power company to move cables.

### **(6) Forestry Commission Management**

The Deputy Surveyor advised the Court that the Dean Forest District is to merge with other Districts and he will manage the new entity covering an area from Cornwall to Shropshire, but based in Coleford. The Verderers congratulated him. He further

advised that there would be one less beat forester and other posts may go, but the new District would gain an ecologist and two Rangers.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **The Future of the Forest**

The Court discussed the visit of the Independent Panel, the members of which had stayed at Speech House. The Senior Verderer had received a letter from the Bishop of Liverpool to thank the Verderers for their help. He had responded and commented that the Court hoped the Forest would be left as it is and under the capable management of the Commission.

The Deputy Surveyor commented that the visit had been problem free and there had been no security issues.

Mr Harper added that he had spoken to the Secretariat who had confirmed the visit had been very useful and that all key groups had been met. He advised that there would be an interim report in the Autumn, with a full Report in Spring 2012. The Panel's advice will be reviewed by the Secretary of State

The Deputy Surveyor noted that the Bishop had been ill, but it is hoped he will recover to enable matters to be progressed later in the year.

Mr Bent advised that he had given a copy of the Royal Charter to the Bishop.

The Senior Verderer commented that the Forest is unique and this had been stressed to the Panel members at every available opportunity.

### **Verderers Chairs**

The Court heard that the Senior Verderer and the Steward had attended Cheltenham Police Station with the antique dealer who had had possession of the chairs. The photograph taken by Melville proved the chairs to be those stolen from the Speech House and the dealer readily acknowledged this and released them back into the possession of the Verderers. He advised that the chairs were of great value.

### **Election of a new Verderer**

The Steward had prepared draft procedural rules for the election and these were approved after amendment and will be circulated in due course. A meeting with the Under Sheriff will be arranged to plan the election when the Writ is issued.

### **Press Release**

The Steward was directed to prepare a statement on behalf of the Court of the Verderers' meeting with the Panel and the input of the Verderers to the review process

**DATES OF NEXT TWO COURT SITTINGS**

The date for the next Court will be Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2011. The following Court date will be the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

The Senior Verderer thanked Mark Harper for attending the Court .

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Verderers

Deputy Surveyor  
Forestry Commission

Steward