

13th April 2012

Dean Forest to wit

At a Special Court of Attachment  
of our Sovereign Lady the Queen at  
The Speech House on the thirteenth  
day of April in the Sixtieth 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  
Twelve

Before

R.W. Jenkins Esq., J.P.  
Ray Wright, Esq.  
M.V. Bent Esq.  
I. J. Standing Esq., BDS, M.A. MUSMS Dip.

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 Verderers planted a tree near The Speech House in honour of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee.

## **APOLOGIES**

None.

## **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Court held on the 13th January 2012 were approved and signed.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

### **Verderers Chairs**

The Senior Verderer advised that there had been no further contact from the Police.

### **Cannop Cycle Centre**

The Court heard that there had been 10,000 crossings of the new Wimberry Bridge since it had been officially opened on the 20<sup>th</sup> March. The Verderers thanked the

Commission for both the invitation to the opening ceremony and for naming the new cycle trail in their honour.

### **St Anthony's Well**

Mr Davies advised that the travellers encamped at the site had left and the site will now be tidied up.

### **Diamond Jubilee**

The Steward confirmed he had written to Her Majesty to congratulate her for her remarkable achievement.

### **Cyril Hart Way**

Mr Davies advised the Court that he had written to Cyril's son and daughter to inform them of the road naming in honour of their father.

## **MINERALS**

Mr Davies reported that the new Deputy Gaveler is making excellent progress in his new post.

Mr Davies also advised that the Coal Authority had capped the hole at Parkend Cricket Club, and that further exploratory digs had revealed no more shafts.

The Court also heard that the fencing around the Rogers and Stowfield Quarries is now complete.

## **COMMONING**

The Deputy Surveyor reported that Mr Holder from the Commoners Association had sent apologies for his inability to attend Court, due to his daughter's illness.

The Court heard there had been significant problems in Yorkley, with sheep straying on to the A48. Animals owned by Mr Barclay had been lifted and impounded. A further 22 sheep owned by Rachel Nyland had also been lifted at another location and impounded. Both owners had paid the requisite fees to 'turn the key' and recover their sheep.

The Parish Council had called a meeting to discuss the sheep problem at The Pludds. Mr Holder had asked for assistance on behalf of the Commoners Association. It was noted that slow progress is being made to rectify the situation.

Following discussions with the Commoners Association, a plan had been formulated to prepare a map of the Bream area showing no-go areas for sheep. Association members will agree to a ban and the bye laws may be changed to enable the Parish council to have sheep lifted.

It was noted that the Association is very keen to encourage responsible shepherding and to avoid the Association being brought into disrepute by the actions of some members.

## **DEER**

The Deputy Surveyor advised the deer cull had proceeded as planned.

He added that there were two areas of concern. The first was that the number of muntjac shot had doubled, suggesting the population may also have doubled. The second was the 40% increase in the number of deer killed in RTAs in the year (85).

## **BOAR AND FERAL PIGS**

The Court was advised that the Friends of the Wild Boar believed the population to be significantly less than the target of 90, but the Commission feel it is far higher than this number, with numbers in excess of 400.

The Commission's research staff continue to analyse the results of the night census and its conclusions are awaited, but the RTAs on boar indicate an increasing population, with 9 in 2010, 18 in 2011 and 33 in 2012.

A new cull target will be set in September.

## **CINDERFORD REGENERATION**

The Senior Verderer welcomed Dr Smith and Mr Williamson, the Principal and Vice Principal of GlosCol and thanked them for attending the Court. Her explained the Verderers' duties to Her Majesty and their concern at the proposed development of the Northern United site

Dr Smith explained that GlosCol had been asked to take over the Forest of Dean College as it was in a parlous state. He stated he had agreed solely because he believes the Forest needs further education facilities, and to do nothing is not an option. The Court heard that half a million pounds had been spent to keep the existing College open, but the current buildings are no longer fit for purpose and the whole site is far too large for the number of students in the Forest. Mr Williamson added that the College is providing community facilities such as the swimming pool and theatre without receiving any income and that the College has a mass of surplus unused space, totalling about 22,000 sq. mtrs. Whereas on 6-7,000 is needed.

Studies had shown the poor accessibility of the Five Acres site, with most bus routes centred on Cinderford. The Northern Quarter was seen as a possible option for a new state-of-the-art College and a curriculum review is being undertaken, both to keep the College viable and to stop the haemorrhage of students from the Forest to other areas such as Hereford. The Court heard that the existing College site had been sold to the HCA for a sum that significantly exceeded its valuation figure, but had also been

leased back at a peppercorn and with an option to repurchase within 5 years if required.

The Court was also advised that the Northern Quarter is the most viable option as GlosCol is neither required to contribute towards the road construction costs nor to pay for the site of the new College. Mr Williamson added that the Area Action Plan had been approved, with a new small College to be constructed to meet the needs of the people of the Forest and its industry, as well as providing A Level facilities.

Mr Standing expressed concern that Forest land had been sold to create the Five Acres site, and now a further sale is contemplated for a replacement College. Mr Davies explained that exchange land will be a pre-requisite and negotiations are ongoing with the stakeholders in this regard.

The Senior Verderer thanked the GlosCol representatives for giving up their valuable time to explain matters to the Court. He presented them with a report from retired Home Office Mine Surveyor, Mr P A Morgan, who is extremely concerned about development of the Northern Quarter, as well as a letter expressing the concerns of the West Dean Parish Council.

## **DEPUTY SURVEYOR'S REPORT**

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

The new cycle bridge at Cannop had been officially opened by the Director General of the Commission on the 20<sup>th</sup> March and named Wimberry Bridge. The new Verderers cycle trail had also been officially opened.

### **(2) Tree Planting**

The Deputy Surveyor advised that four possible sites are being investigated for the proposed planting by the Commission and the District Council of 60 trees to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

### **(3) Transition Towns**

This is an organisation that looks to a future for communities when oil is no longer available and there is a Transition Forest project, looking for community orchards and allotments, as well as the potential for community coppicing for sustainable fuel.

### **(4) Forest District**

The District officially closed on the 31<sup>st</sup> March, to be replaced by the new West England Forest District with its Head Office in Coleford. In order to maintain front line capacity, two new forest wardens had been appointed, and an additional Ranger will be appointed. The district had also gained the services of an ecologist. The Senior Verderer asked the Deputy Surveyor to pass on the Court's congratulations to Jim Sauter in recognition of his promotion to Head of Land Management.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **(1) High Sheriff**

The Steward was instructed to write to the new High Sheriff on behalf of the Verderers and to invite him to the next Court.

### **(2) Boundary Stones**

An official Commission publication was distributed detailing the Boundary Stones of the Forest

### **(3) Horse Carriageway**

In response to an enquiry from Mr Standing, the Deputy Surveyor advised that a project officer had been appointed by the group promoting the scheme and that the group would undertake further consultation.

### **(4) HOOF**

Mr Standing advised that a delegate from HOOF had met with the Bishop of Liverpool to emphasise the importance of the 1981 Forestry Act. He added that the Bishop had been extremely receptive and very upbeat.

## **DATES OF NEXT TWO COURT SITTINGS**

The date for the next Court will be Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

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Verderers

Deputy Surveyor  
Forestry Commission

Steward

