

15th January 2016
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 January in the Sixty Fourth 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
Sixteen

Before

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

K.G.Stannard Esq., Deputy Surveyor
Forestry Commission

Penny Simpson (Mrs) M.R.I.C.S.,
Area Land Agent, Forestry Commission

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

Prior to the commencement of the Court, the Senior Verderer welcomed the Assistant Area Land Agent, Lewis James.

APOLOGIES

None

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Court held on the 9th October 2015 were approved and signed.

MATTERS ARISING

Beechenhurst

The Court heard that planning permission had been granted for the extension to the building. A contractor is to be appointed to commence work in February.

MINERALS

Mrs Simpson advised the Court of developments at the Clearwell and Stowe Hill Quarries, with Stowe Hill seeking consent for a large extension to the site and new access to the main road. This is a big scheme with ongoing negotiations.

She added that output at the Stowfield Quarry and the two large stone quarries at Bixslade and Birh Hill continues to increase.

Mr Standing referred to a licence obtained to extract methane from coal workings but the Deputy Surveyor advised the Commission had not been consulted about this. He added that if an application is made to drill on publicly owned land, a ministerial decision would be required, but no planning permission is necessary in such cases. After some discussion, it was agreed Mr Standing and the Steward will liaise to raise the matter in the press, in line with the Verderers' duty to protect the Forest.

COMMONING

The Deputy Surveyor advised that the District Council had established a Scrutiny Review Group to investigate the issue of sheep nuisance in the communities. He added that he had given evidence to the Group, as had Ceri Evans and Mick Holder.

In addition, there had been public meetings and consultations and a Report is expected mid February. The Commoners Association fear the irresponsible behaviour of one or two sheep owners will cause issues for responsible Commoners, especially as the Council is considering the use of open space protection orders. These anti social behaviour orders are designed to protect against noise, dog mess and so forth and the activity has to be specific to enable the owner to know what can be enforced. The Deputy Surveyor added that technical issues and the fact that only the Police can prosecute may prevent the use of these statutory orders.

DEER

The Deputy Surveyor advised the annual thermal imaging survey will commence shortly, with a target population of 800 deer.

BOAR AND FERAL PIGS

The Deputy Surveyor commented that the cull has been going well as a result of the additional manpower and the cull target to achieve a target population of 400 should be achieved. The thermal imaging survey results will shed light on the situation.

CINDERFORD REGENERATION

Mrs Simpson advised that the land exchange arrangements between the Commission and the Council had been approved by the Minister and the documentation to achieve this is in course of preparation. She added the road construction will commence in March, with the College construction to follow after the road has been completed.

DEPUTY SURVEYOR'S REPORT

Tree Diseases

Nothing to report, but the wet and unseasonably warm weather may cause growth of fungi and bacteria to threaten certain tree species.

Heritage Lottery Funding

There is a great deal of activity including an ongoing archaeological survey with many enthusiastic volunteers; ecological work with the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and other interested parties and fencing of the heritage sites for grazing. In addition, funding is to be sought for the renovation of the Sling Scarr bandstand. There is much more work to do before the submission is made for the main funding..

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Election of a New Verderer

The documentation is being sent or has been forwarded to the Master of the Crown Office by Wilma Harper, Secretary to the Commissioners.. The Master will arrange for the issue of the Writ to be sent to the High Sheriff's Officer, Nicholas Tanner. The High Sheriff will then be able to proceed with the election process.

Mr Standing raised a query about the cost of this. The Deputy Surveyor responded that the Commission will pay an amount to assist with the funding of the election, with each candidate to pay a fee of £250 to stand. The successful candidate will have to pay any surplus.

Speech House Hotel

The Court Room is to be redecorated and the Senior Verderer queried whether the Verderers should be more involved in the decision making process in this regard. The Deputy Surveyor advised that the Lease of the Hotel reserves the Room for the Verderers use on 4 occasions each year and once for the Inclosure Commissioners, but there is no other condition and redecoration is seen as routine maintenance..

With regard to the paintings in the Room, the Court heard there are no funds available for restoration and the Commission could not justify use of public funds for this, and the Arts Council would not be interested. The Verderers will investigate if there is any possibility of raising funds for this task.

DATES OF NEXT TWO COURT SITTINGS

The date for the next two Courts will be Friday the 8th April 2016 and Friday the 1st July 2016

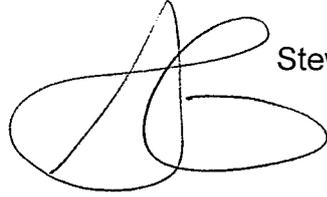
*Richard H
Ian Skelton
M. Bent*

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Verderers

Deputy Surveyor
Forestry Commission

*John M
On behalf of the
Deputy Surveyor.*



Steward