



Verderers of the New Forest
THE KINGS'S HOUSE
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Official Verderer
Edward Heron

30th January 2026

MINUTES OF THE HLS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 28th January 2026

Voting Members		
Edward Heron	OV	Official Verderer – Verderers of the New Forest (Chairman)
Alison Barnes	AB	Chief Executive - New Forest National Park Authority
Craig Harrison	DS	Deputy Surveyor – Forestry England
Non-Voting Members		
Jenny Thomas	JT	New Forest Nature Recovery Senior Adviser – Natural England
In Attendance		
Tina Woodley	TW	VGS Administrator
Suzannah Egleston	SE	HLS Project Manager – Forestry England
Mike Pittock	MP	Head of Planning & Environment – Forestry England

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESUME

Andrew Parry-Norton - CDA Representative

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESUME

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.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESUME

None arising. Minutes from the October meeting were approved and signed.

PROGRAMME AND SUMMARY

RESUME

The board studied the latest Programme Register of spend to the end of December 2025 (QTR 3).

See programme register and actual spend to date attached below.

FE UPDATE

RESUME

See report attached below.

Staffing Proposal

Project Officer for Wetland Restoration Works

The board agreed appointing a Wetland Restoration Project Officer to expand the capacity for the delivery of Wetland projects.

HLS Ecologist

The Board agreed to the reinstated post of HLS Ecologist. FE & NPA to look into possibility of this being 2 apprentice posts to work with both the HLS and NE teams. Action SE & AB

HLS Engagement Officer

The board asked SE to provide a refined request with the potential options for this role before they could agree to the proposal.

HLS Vehicles

The board requested a breakdown of the proposal be circulated before agreement could be given to the additional budget.

SE to organise a site visit to Millersford in the morning of the Spring HLS Meeting. SE to arrange details and forward to TW. Action SE

VGS UPDATE

RESUME

See attached VGS Committee Meeting minutes from meeting held 26th November 25.

MP offered to assist TW with the GIS mapping to make use of the newly digitalized data collected on the haunts of the forest stock.

ENGAGEMENT AND INTERPRETATION OFFICER WRITTEN UPDATE

RESUME

See report attached below.

HIWWT WRITTEN UPDATE

RESUME

See report attached below.

ARCHAEOLOGY REPORT

RESUME

See report attached below.

NFLAS WRITTEN UPDATE

RESUME

See report attached below.

JT gave a verbal report that the government have signalled their ongoing commitment to LR but no announcements about a further round have been made. .
 AB informed the board that the Partnership Leaders Plan Meeting is scheduled for 24th March and that it will be important for the forest to put forward a quantified budget / balance sheet of what the forest needs funding towards - this may need to be done by a commissioned consultant. Other National Parks have run pilots to construct the information.

AOB

JT noted that NE are working on a 4 year project to publish a strategy on managing deer numbers in protected sites in the New Forest and South Wiltshire

TW to arrange a simple AGM for May – to cover 2024 & 2025 once the Healthcheck report has been collated.

Action TW

The board were informed that the New Forest Freshwater & Wetland Restoration Forum has a new independent chair – John Stride

Meeting closed 11.12 a.m.

DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS 2026

AGM – Sept dateTBC

Wednesday April 29th – 9.30 The Annexe – Kings House

Wednesday July 22nd – 9.30 The Annexe - Kings House

Wednesday October 28th – 9.30 Kings House

Delegated Actions to		
Suzannah Egleston	SE	HLS Project Manager - FE
Tina Woodley	TW	VGS Administrator
Alison Barnes	AB	Chief Executive - NFNPA



29th April 2026

Edward Heron
 Official Verderer

Spend profile 2025-2026 3rd Quarter

Register Serial number	Task Mgr	Project Title	Budget 2025-2026	Revised Forecast 2025/26	Actual spend to 31.12.2025	Updated by	Comments
Verderers Grazing Scheme STAFF							
1	TW	VGS Project Staff	£39,757.00	£39,757.00	£17,279.17	TW	
2	TW	Administration	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£8,660.20	TW	
			£49,757.00	£49,757.00	£25,939.37		
Verderers Grazing Scheme							
3	TW	VGS Grazing payments 2025 £774,957 Grazing Scheme £250,000 Cattle Supplement	£1,024,957.00	£1,024,957.00	£986,130.66	TW	Increase to 2025 cattle supplement now £250K - Increase to Grazing payment to £774,957
4	TW	Sponsorship of Land Advice Service	£53,905.22	£53,905.22	£53,905.22	TW	
5	TW	Small Grant fund	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£9,650.00	TW	increased Sml Grant fund by £5k
6	TW	Microchipping at Beaulieu Road Sales	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	TW	no microchipping 2025
7	TW	Reflective collars	£24,000.00	£24,000.00	£19,460.66	TW	
8	TW	Agister Salary contribution	£57,000.00	£57,000.00	£57,000.00	TW	
9	TW	Stallion Scheme	£17,737.00	£17,737.00	£16,710.66	TW	
10	TW	Bloodline Scheme	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	TW	
11	TW	Futurity Scheme	£8,000.00	£8,000.00	£8,000.00	TW	
13	TW	NF Livestock Society (Marketing + £1,000 Foal Shows)	£9,000.00	£9,000.00	£9,000.00	TW	
14	TW	NF Trust (Beaulieu Road Maintenance)	£6,500.00	£6,500.00	£6,500.00	TW	
15	TW	NF Pony Enthusiasts Club	£1,500.00	£1,500.00	£1,500.00	TW	
16	TW	Pony Welfare & Fallen Stock Programme	£25,000.00	£25,000.00	£19,600.00	TW	
17	TW	Young Commoner training	£3,500.00	£3,500.00	£3,500.00	TW	
18	TW	Drift Fencing	£24,000.00	£24,000.00	£9,967.92	TW	increased by £5k from micro chip fund
91	TW	Agisters Equipment Servicing / Etc	£1,845.27	£1,845.27	£1,845.27	TW	
19	TW	Pound rebuild programme	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£10,766.81	TW	
			VGS Sub Total	£1,281,944.49	£1,213,537.20		
			VGS Grand Total	£1,331,701.49	£1,239,476.57		
Higher Level Stewardship Overheads - STAFF COSTS							
20	TW	HLS Secretarial Support from Verderers	£15,812.00	£15,812.00	£15,812.00	TW	
21	NPA	NPA Staff Costs	£27,594.00	£27,594.00	£0.00	TW	
22	NH	FC Supporting Staff & Admin costs	£26,430.00	£26,430.00	£20,467.20	CB	
			£69,836.00	£69,836.00	£36,279.20		
Higher Level Stewardship Overheads - Other							
			NPA				
23	CB	Communications - Support	£32,086.00	£32,086.00	£0.00	TW	
24	CB	Communications - Phones & Trackers	£2,000.00	£2,000.00	£932.92	CB	
21	CB	FC Office Overheads	£3,000.00	£3,000.00	£1,534.50	CB	
21	CB	FC Staff Overheads	£15,000.00	£15,000.00	£4,690.95	CB	
93	CB	FC Vehicle Leasing	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£15,307.08	CB	
			£80,132.00	£82,086.00	£22,465.45		
Non Native and Invasive Plant Control							
33	TW	Non Native plants Project	£37,000.00	£37,000.00	£37,000.00	TW	
			£37,000.00	£37,000.00	£37,000.00		
Scheduled Ancient Monument							
32	CB	no projects planned	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	CB	
			£0.00	£0.00	£0.00		
National Park Authority							
71	NPA	Lidar Analyst	£44,571.00	£44,571.00		TW	
73	NPA	Lidar Non-Staff	£9,423.00	£9,426.00		TW	
			£53,994.00	£53,994.00	£0.00		
Redundancy Contingency							
600	TW	Project Staff	£4,524.57	£4,524.57	£0.00	TW	
			£4,524.57	£4,524.57	£0.00		
Forestry England TERRESTRIAL RESTORATION							
63	CB	Open Habitat Restoration	£241,825.00	£241,825.00	£71,148.77	CB	
64	CB	Tools, Equipment & Maintenance	£0.00	£0.00	£1,779.35	CB	
1903	CB	Ridge & Furrow removal	£192,545.00	£192,545.00	£0.00	CB	
65	CB	Rhododendron Control	£56,450.00	£56,450.00	£8,436.00	CB	
66	CB	Bracken Control	£41,580.00	£41,580.00	£25,805.00	CB	
2405	CB	Anderwood	£0.00	£0.00	£20,388.00	CB	
68	CB	Coppicing/Pollarding	£38,000.00	£38,000.00	£0.00	CB	
2201	CB	Conifer removal from A&O woodland	£55,470.00	£55,470.00	£0.00	CB	
2202	CB	Thinning A & O plots	£1,425.00	£1,425.00	£0.00	CB	
69	CB	Lost Lawns	£2,375.00	£2,375.00	£0.00	CB	
70	CB	Verge Restoration	£80,265.00	£80,265.00	£57,985.72	CB	
			£709,935.00	£709,935.00	£185,542.84		
			£0.00	£0.00	£0.00		
Monitoring							
102	CB	Bats	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£1,860.00	CB	
25	CB	Botanical Survey	£75,900.00	£75,900.00	£55,474.97	CB	
103	CB	Water Hydrology	£6,000.00	£6,000.00	£3,569.63	CB	
107	CB	River Habitat Survey	£2,000.00	£2,000.00	£0.00	CB	
140	CB	Breeding Wader Survey	£19,000.00	£19,000.00	£0.00	CB	
191	CB	Rare Spider Survey	£11,820.00	£11,820.00	£3,780.00	CB	
2404	CB	Wetland Monitoring Surveys	£0.00	£4,680.00	£3,900.00	CB	
2407	CB	Invertebrate Survey	£21,240.00	£21,240.00	£0.00	CB	
105	CB	Riverfly Partnership	£200.00	£200.00	£45.50	CB	
			£141,160.00	£145,840.00	£68,630.10		
WETLAND							
Project Staff Costs							
57	CB	Terrestrial Works Supervisor Pb6a	£37,908.00	£37,908.00	£31,271.37	CB	
60	CB	Contract Manager Pb4	£51,414.00	£51,414.00	£42,145.02	CB	
61	CB	Terrestrial Restoration Works Officer Pb5	£40,635.00	£40,635.00	£34,721.16	CB	
62	CB	Wetland Restoration Officer Pb5	£40,635.00	£40,635.00	£34,721.16	CB	
622	CB	Monitoring Officer Pb6a	£40,635.00	£40,635.00	£34,725.31	CB	
623	CB	Verge Restoration Officer Pb6a	£37,908.00	£37,908.00	£22,726.08	CB	
2206	CB	Works Supervisor Wetland Pb6a	£18,954.00	£18,954.00	£15,700.36	CB	
			£268,089.00	£268,089.00	£216,010.46		
Wetland Restoration							
2408	CB	Consents	£400.00	£400.00	£100.00	CB	
48	CB	Repair and Maintenance	£75,000.00	£75,000.00	£46,326.94	CB	
47	CB	North Sluffers	£150,000.00	£150,000.00	£57,001.62	CB	
152	CB	Wetland Restoration Sites - Shirley Holms Mire	£866.40	£866.40	£866.40	CB	
2406	CB	Longdown	£45,000.00	£45,000.00	£29,875.84	CB	
			£271,266.40	£271,266.40	£134,170.80		0.00
T&C Planning Costs							
CB		Planning Application & Site Planning	£70,000.00	£70,000.00	£0.00	CB	
			£70,000.00	£70,000.00	£0.00		
			£750,515.40	£755,195.40	£418,811.36		
			£1,536,880.40	£1,541,560.40	£647,286.85		claim 44 £311,728.07

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	Planned Spend Estimate	Actual Spend to Date
Total VGS Spend	£1,368,701.49	£1,276,476.57
HLS Overheads Staff Costs	£69,836.00	£36,279.20
Non Native plants & SAMS	£37,000.00	£37,000.00
Monitoring	£141,160.00	£68,630.10
Project Staff Costs	£272,613.57	£216,010.46
Terrestrial & Wetland Restoration	£981,201.40	£319,713.64
T & C Planning costs	£70,000.00	£0.00
NPA	£53,994.00	£0.00
TOTAL Planned Spend	£2,994,506.46	TOTAL Actual Spend
		£1,954,109.97

Income from NE		Actual Income from NE	£4,316,682.75
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End of year payment	£4,316,682.75	End of year payment	£4,316,682.75
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Budgeted in-year Reserve 2025	£1,322,176.29	In-year Reserve	£2,362,572.78
B/fwd Reserve from 2024	£1,443,358.77	B/fwd Reserve 2024	£1,443,358.77
Budgeted accumulated Reserve	£2,765,535.06	Accumulated Reserve	£3,805,931.55

Education Payment - Annual payment

NPA	Educational Access - payment per visit	£5,190.00	£5,190.00
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Spend profile: 2025-26					
Register Serial No.	Project Title	Budget Apr25-Mar26	Revised Forecast	Actual spend to 31.12.25	Comments / Proposed restoration sites
HLS Overheads - STAFF COSTS					
22	FE Supporting Staff & Admin costs	£26,430.00	£26,430.00	£20,467.20	
60	Project Manager Pb4	£51,414.00	£51,414.00	£42,145.02	
61	Terrestrial Restoration Officer Pb5	£40,635.00	£40,635.00	£34,721.16	
57	Works Supervisor Pb6a	£37,908.00	£37,908.00	£31,271.37	
62	Wetland Restoration Officer Pb5	£40,635.00	£40,635.00	£34,721.16	
622	Monitoring Project Officer Pb5	£40,635.00	£40,635.00	£34,725.31	
623	Verge Restoration Officer Pb6a	£37,908.00	£37,908.00	£22,726.08	
2206	Works Supervisor Pb6a (0.5 FTE)	£18,954.00	£18,954.00	£15,700.36	
	Sub-total	£294,519.00	£294,519.00	£236,477.66	
HLS Overheads - Other					
23	Communications	£2,000.00	£2,000.00	£932.92	
24	Forestry England - Office Charges	£3,000.00	£3,000.00	£1,534.50	
93	Forestry England - Vehicle Leasing & Business Related Mileage	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£15,307.08	
21	Miscellaneous Staff Costs	£15,000.00	£15,000.00	£4,690.95	
	Sub-total	£50,000.00	£50,000.00	£22,465.45	
	Sub-total Overheads	£344,519.00	£344,519.00	£258,943.11	Overhead Expenditure
Historic Environment					
		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	
Option HO2 Restoration of Lowland Heath					
63	Open Habitat Restoration	£241,825.00	£241,825.00	£71,148.77	Timber felling, stump shear removal and extraction from Knightwood, Slufers, Matley Bog, North Slufers, Holidays Hill and Ipley.
64	Tools, Equipment and Maintenance	£0.00	£0.00	£1,779.35	Tools and equipment for repairs and maintenance across all sites. Including works signs for safety. (New PR no.)
65	Rhododendron	£56,450.00	£56,450.00	£8,436.00	Rhododendron spraying at various locations.
66	Bracken Control	£41,580.00	£41,580.00	£25,805.00	Forage harvesting of bracken upon open forest sites.
1903	Ridge and Furrow	£192,545.00	£192,545.00	£0.00	
	Sub-total	£577,800.00	£577,800.00	£107,169.12	
Option HC13 Restoration of Wood Pasture & Parkland					
68	Coppicing/ Pollarding and Holly Management	£38,000.00	£38,000.00	£0.00	
2201	Restoration of A&O Woodlands	£55,470.00	£55,470.00	£0.00	
2202	Thinning A&O Plots (timber clearance)	£1,425.00	£1,425.00	£0.00	
	Sub-total	£94,895.00	£94,895.00	£0.00	
Option HK7 Restoration of Species Rich Grassland					
69	Lost Lawns	£2,375.00	£2,375.00	£0.00	
70	Verge Restoration	£80,265.00	£80,265.00	£57,985.72	Verge restoration project.
2405	Wetland Restoration sites: Anderwood	£0.00	£0.00	£20,388.00	Felling and extraction of Timber as part of wetland restoration (not overspend; new PR number added).
	Sub-total	£83,040.00	£83,040.00	£78,373.72	
Survey and Monitoring					
25	Botanical Survey	£75,900.00	£75,900.00	£55,474.97	New Forest 2025 wetland habitat and vegetation surveys, habitat mapping at Pondhead and Wootton and Knightwood restoration review and botanical/ habitat survey.
102	Bat Surveys	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£1,860.00	Bat survey: Ground level tree assessment at Knightwood.
104	Resources/ Monitoring Equipment	£6,000.00	£6,000.00	£3,569.63	Resources and equipment for monitoring (including chemicals).
105	Riverfly Partnership	£200.00	£200.00	£45.50	Riverfly guides for monitoring volunteers.
107	River Habitat Surveys	£2,000.00	£2,000.00	£0.00	
140	Breeding Wader Surveys	£19,000.00	£19,000.00	£0.00	
191	Rare Spider Surveys	£11,820.00	£11,820.00	£3,780.00	April, May, June (partial) and July rare spider surveys.
2404	Wetland Monitoring Surveys	£0.00	£4,680.00	£3,900.00	HLS Case Study: post wetland restoration survey.
2407	Invertebrate Surveys	£21,240.00	£21,240.00	£0.00	
	Sub-total	£141,160.00	£141,160.00	£68,630.10	
Wetland Restoration					
47	North Slufers	£150,000.00	£150,000.00	£57,001.62	Wetland restoration work at North Slufers.
48	Repairs and Maintenance	£75,000.00	£75,000.00	£46,326.94	Wetland restoration repairs at Penny Moor and Picket Bottom Mire.
152	Wetland Restoration sites: Shirley Holms Mire	£0.00	£866.40	£866.40	Fencing around wetland restoration at Shirley Holms Mire (additional unexpected cost).
2406	Wetland Restoration sites: Longdown	£45,000.00	£45,000.00	£29,875.84	Felling and extraction of Timber as part of wetland restoration (following bat surveys).
2408	Consents	£400.00	£400.00	£100.00	Anderwood and Longdown watercourse council consents.
TBD	Planning Application and Site Planning.	£70,000.00	£70,000.00	£0.00	
	Sub-total	£340,400.00	£416,266.40	£134,170.80	
	Operational Expenditure	£1,191,895.00	£1,313,161.40	£388,343.74	Operational Expenditure
	TOTAL Expenditure	£1,536,414.00	£1,657,680.40	£647,286.85	TOTAL Expenditure

Register Serial No.	Project Title	Budget Apr26-Mar27	Revised Forecast	Actual spend to	Comments / Proposed restoration sites
Spend profile: 2025-26					
HLS Overheads - STAFF COSTS					
22	FE Supporting Staff & Admin costs	£30,299.76			
60	Project Manager Pb4	£57,396.00			
61	Terrestrial Restoration Officer Pb5	£47,988.96			
57	Works Supervisor Pb6a	£42,591.48			
62	Wetland Restoration Officer Pb5	£47,988.96			
	Wetland work supervisor PB6a	£42,591.48			
622	Monitoring Project Officer Pb5	£47,988.96			
2206	Works Supervisor Pb6a (0.5 FTE)	£21,352.28			
623	Engagement Officer Pb6a (Replacement)	£42,591.48			
	Ecologist PB 5 (New Role)	£47,988.96			
	Wetland Restoration Officer Pb5 (New Role)	£47,988.96			
	Sub-total	£476,767.28			
HLS Overheads - Other					
23	Communications	£2,000.00			
24	Forestry England - Office Charges	£3,000.00			
93	Forestry England - Vehicle Leasing & Business Related Mileage	£50,000.00			1x Replacement 3 seater 4x4 1x Extra 5 seater 4x4 1x replacement 5 seater instead of van
21	Miscellaneous Staff Costs	£20,000.00			
	Sub-total	£75,000.00			
	Sub-total Overheads	£551,767.28			Overhead Expenditure
Historic Environment					
		£0.00			
Option HO2 Restoration of Lowland Heath					
63	Open Habitat Restoration	£600,000.00			Includes felling for wetland restoration sites: Millersford, Lodge Heath, Foulford
65	Rhododendron	£55,000.00			
66	Bracken Control	£45,000.00			
1903	Ridge and Furrow	£250,000.00			
	Sub-total	£950,000.00			
Option HC13 Restoration of Wood Pasture & Parkland					
68	Coppicing/ Pollarding and Holly Management	£40,000.00			
2201	Restoration of A&O Woodlands	£50,000.00			
2202	Thinning A&O Plots (timber clearance)	£10,000.00			
	Sub-total	£100,000.00			
Option HK7 Restoration of Species Rich Grassland					
69	Lost Lawns	£0.00			
70	Verge Restoration	£10,000.00			
	Sub-total	£10,000.00			
Survey and Monitoring					
25	Botanical Survey	£200,000.00			
102	Bat Surveys	£25,000.00			
na	Rare Species	£25,000.00			
2407	Invertebrate Surveys	£25,000.00			
104	Resources & Equipment	£11,000.00			
	Sub-total	£286,000.00			
Wetland Restoration					
	Vales Moor / Foulford	£30,000.00			
48	Repairs and Maintenance	£75,000.00			
152	Knightwood	£200,000.00			
	Ipley	£100,000.00			
	Fawley	£60,000.00			
47	North Sluffers	£50,000.00			
2408	Consents	£2,000.00			
TBD	Planning Application and Site Planning.	£100,000.00			
	Sub-total	£617,000.00	#REF!		
	Operational Expenditure	£1,963,000.00	#REF!		Operational Expenditure
	TOTAL Expenditure	£2,514,767.28	#REF!		TOTAL Expenditure

HLS Staffing Proposal

Introduction:

The HLS Team are delivering restorations at pace and at capacity. However, there are ambitions to deliver at a greater scale especially wetland restorations. This paper sets out the roles required to expand the impact of the delivery considering the HLS objectives and the recent funding uplift.

Approval sought for 3 additional roles:

1. Project Officer - focusing on large scale wetland restoration (new role)
2. Ecologist - supporting the delivery of all HLS projects, providing specialist support (new role)
3. Engagement Officer - providing engagement to support the work delivered through the HLS Scheme (new role)

Estimated cost implications (per annum):

Project Officer	£50,000
Ecologist	£50,000
Engagement Officer	£45,000
Additional Vehicles	£20,000
TOTAL	£165,000

Detail of roles and delivery:

Project Officer

A Project Officer is required to expand the delivery of the HLS wetland restoration works particularly focusing on larger projects whilst the current Project Officer delivers our main programme including repairs.

If we do not recruit this role we need to choose between our regular programme and a larger restoration site as it is proving difficult to progress both simultaneously.

The current Project Officer completes around 3 smaller restorations per year, and this year will be focusing on a larger scale restoration at Knightwood and Lodge Heath in 2027, as well as completing annual repairs to previous sites. When outside of the wetland delivery window the preparation work is completed including planning each site, tree work during the winter months, surveying and gaining consents. The work involved in planning and delivering wetland restorations has increased dramatically to support the

delivery objectives set out in the New Forest Wetland Restoration Forum and navigate the scrutiny that such projects often attract.

The additional role will allow for focused effort on the progression of the larger scale projects which without dedicated resource are progressing at a slower pace. The additional Project Officer will accelerate this pace and spend the funds dedicated to the planning permission (£100k) as well as progressing large scale wetland restorations which will account for a significant annual spend over multiple years.

The Project Officer would be responsible for:

- Delivery of large-scale wetland restorations following the methods set out in the New Forest Wetland Restoration Plan
- Planning the works and relevant documentation related to this
- Conducting consultations with stakeholders to gain approval for restorations.
- Gaining consents and working with regulatory bodies including the National Park Authority, Natural England and the Environment Agency
- Supporting the development of communications plans
- Procurement of goods and services
- Management of the wetland restoration sites during delivery
- Management of contractors

Ecologist

Currently all ecological support for the HLS delivery is provided by Forestry England's core ecological team. This accounts for hours per week including advice, site visits and support with approaches and consent. In the past the HLS Programme has had ecological support with a Senior Wetland Restoration Officer role where the post holder had expertise in ecological and operational delivery. This role ceased in 2023/24.

Recruiting dedicated ecological resource would hold mutual benefits for the HLS Programme and Forestry England. Benefitting the HLS team by providing expert ecological advice, applying for consents and supervising or carrying out ecological surveys that are often required for specialised ecological species that occur in the New Forest. There would be greater capacity to deliver works, and ecological support would not need to be balanced between the HLS Programme and the wider area stretching from Dorking to Dorset.

The Ecologist would be responsible for:

- Supporting the delivery of all HLS work, providing ecological expertise ensuring a robust ecological approach
- Completing ecological documentation
- Completing ecological surveys
- Procuring and supervising ecological surveys

- Supporting consultations with stakeholders to gain approval for restorations.
- Gaining consents and working with regulatory bodies including the National Park Authority, Natural England and the Environment Agency

Engagement Officer

This vacancy will prioritise greater engagement to help support the work delivered through the HLS scheme. Supporting the delivery of our work, particularly our up-and-coming programmes, gaining support for our restoration work through engagement with local communities and visitors. For example, hosting site specific events pre or post restoration, telling our story and particularly reaching new audiences and demonstrating the breadth and scale of our work.

In many cases, the restorations delivered, particularly wetland restoration are subject to high levels of scrutiny. This post will proactively engage with our stakeholders, building on the strong rationale for delivering the projects. Proactive management is not only cost effective, but it should also provide better outcomes as there will be a more focused effort on communication at all levels.

The role requires an innovative communicator with experience of engaging with the public in a positive manner, especially around behaviour change and impact. They will be able to confidently manage difficult situations particularly visitor behaviour. Knowledge and understanding of wildlife and/or protected landscapes, and experience of supervising operational contracts and resources are also beneficial for this role.

The Engagement Officer would be responsible for:

- Supporting the objectives of our specific programmes.
- Working alongside staff, contractors, local stakeholders and others to help promote and protect the New Forest's habitats and grazing. The post holder will engage with local communities and visitors, patrolling and assessing sites across the New Forest.
- Raising awareness and understanding of HLS projects to restore and protect heathlands and wetlands. This would include engagement opportunities around works at new and ongoing sites and seek to engage communities understanding of the importance of these landscapes.

Actions from HLS Board Meeting held on 29/10/2025

- Recruitment started for the Habitat Work Supervisor

Overview of habitat restoration delivered October 2025- January 2026:

HLS project	Habitat restoration work delivered Oct 2025 to January 2026
Open habitat restoration	Matley Bog removal of mature conifer North Slufters removal of mature conifer Ipley - removal of birch and pine Timber Clearance from Turf Hill/Millersford, Knightwood, North Slufters
A&O (Ancient and Ornamental) woodland restoration	Timber Clearance from Brook wood
Ridge & furrow	Clearfell Restoration including stump shearing, rake and burn of arisings, and artificial drains infilled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milkham • Woosons/Holidays Hill (North Knightwood)
Rhododendron	10 sites to managed by the end of March 2026:
Bracken control	Bracken harvesting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Slufters • Ravensnest • Dunces Arch • Highland Water • Turf Hill/Millersford • Anderwood Lawn.
Holly coppicing/pollarding	Holly Management for Epiphytic Lichens Contracts are in place and the work priod extends from 19 th Jan to 28 th March 10 sites across the forest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Beech • Little Wood • Shave Wood • French's Bushes • Gutter Heath • Buskett's Wood • James' Hill • Pig Bush • Stubbs Wood (Penerley) • Dibden/The Noads Total area to be managed = 9.5ha

HLS Board Meeting Update October 2025- January 2026

Lost lawns project	Timber Clearance from Anderwood Lawn, Balmer Lawn,
Verge restoration	Setley - DTs and ditching Parkhill Lawn - ditching and barriers Nomansland - ditching Cott Lane, Burley - barriers
Wetland restoration and repairs/maintenance	Felling of trees at Ipley, planning for next year, procurement and felling commencing at Knightwood, to allow for wetland restoration next year.

HLS Forestry England Progress Report

Updates should be read in conjunction with the FE HLS Budget Forecast (Annex A).

Budget Update

Claim 44 has been prepared. An updated Forestry England HLS budget forecast is attached (Annex A) summarising Forestry England's actual spend for Q1, Q2 & 3 (01 April 2025 to 30th December 2025).

In terms of spend, where possible works have been increased to utilise the uplift. For example, the size of a site area may have been increased. Currently the spending is in line with the budget proposal. Although there is a large underspend winter works are currently in progress and will be invoiced at the end of the final quarter.

Considering the uplift and our ambitions to deliver more wetland restoration an aspirational budget has been prepared for the next financial year. The HLS team members are currently delivering at capacity therefore to be able to deliver more, additional roles are required to lead the work. The proposed budget includes new roles alongside the expected works that will be undertaken. After discussion a final revised budget for 2026/2027 will be shared.

Staff Updates

Recruitment has commenced for a Work Supervisor to support our current wetland work; interviews are currently in progress.

Suzannah Egleston (HLS Project Monitoring Officer) is now covering the role of Project Manager and Beren Ashton-Butler is covering the Monitoring Officer role.

Attached is an Annex setting out further staffing requirements.

Restoration of Lowland Heath: Option H02

This option aims to encourage the restoration of lowland heathland, including both dry and wet heathland, and mire habitats on the Open Forest. Such sites are likely to have become degraded by scrub, bracken, secondary woodland encroachment or inappropriate drainage. Management will help to restore and strengthen the vegetation mosaics characteristic of lowland heathland, and thus enhance the integrity of the historic landscape character of the area.

Open habitat restoration: PR serial no. 63

The HLS Scheme is funding the restoration of lowland heath on sites that have been used for plantation forestry. This programme of works includes removal of mature conifer, clearance of felled conifer and removal of natural regeneration, on areas of wet and dry heathland open to grazing livestock.

This work commenced in September with the aim to remove natural regeneration from the following sites:

- North Slufters
- Ipley
- Milkham Inclosure
- Highland Water Inclosure
- Fawley Inclosure

Mature conifer removal:

- The following projects will be completed between September 2025 & April 2026 including the removal of mature conifer and in some cases native broadleaves from open habitats, bogs, mires and drain lines supporting future wetland restoration:
 - North Slufters
 - Knightwood Inclosure
 - Ipley Inclosure
 - Matley Bog
 - Milkham Inclosure

Ridge & furrow removal and stump shearing: PR serial no. 1903

The HLS Scheme is funding the restoration of lowland heath on sites that have been used for plantation forestry. This programme of work includes the removal of ridges and furrows and shearing of stumps to restore areas of wet or dry heathland, currently open to grazing.

HLS Board Meeting Update October 2025- January 2026

- The following projects will be completed between September 2025 & February 2026:
 - Highland Water
 - Milkham
 - Holidays Hill Inclosure
 - North Sluffers
 - Dames Slough

Rhododendron management: PR serial no. 65

The HLS Scheme funds a rolling programme of work to control non-native rhododendron that is encroaching on open habitats. Different methods are used, depending on the size of the plant; smaller plants are targeted through foliar spray, while larger bushes (>1.2 m in height) are cut down and arisings burnt. Many sites have been surveyed, and this work continues to inform the programme.

- The winter cutting and burning of rhododendron is due to commence in January at several sites.

Bracken management: PR serial no. 66

The HLS Scheme funds a rolling programme of work on areas that have been restored to open habitat where bracken is becoming over-dominant and outcompeting other native species, thus reducing species diversity:

Holly holm management: PR serial 2301

This is a one-off project following on from a successful trial to encourage holly holm regeneration by removing grazing pressure via temporary enclosures. Deer-proof fencing has been erected around selected holly holms where regeneration has been in decline. The pens will be in place for at least 5 years to allow time for holly to regenerate around the base and trunk.

Management and monitoring has been undertaken and continues over the winter period.

There are no plans to erect regeneration pens in 2025, however there are plans to identify a further six locations for pens for the late summer and autumn 2026.

Restoration of Wood Pasture & Parkland: Option HC13

The aim of this option is to restore wood pasture (including the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) habitats of pasture woodland, riverine woodland and bog woodland in the Open Forest) to favourable condition. This applies where land has been planted with conifers or where Scots pine has spread and trees or other non-natives need to be removed.

A project is currently being planned at Puckpits Bog in Holmhill Inclosure.

Holly pollarding: PR serial no. 68

HLS is funding the restoration of A&O woodlands through a programme of work that aims to reduce the shade from dense holly to benefit epiphytic lichens. This is critical work as the old growth pasture woodlands support an internationally important lichen assemblage.

A rolling programme of work is targeting sites highlighted in a 2018/19 Holly Management and Epiphytic Lichen Conservation Survey Report conducted by Neil Sanderson as ‘urgent priority’ and ‘priority’ areas, encompassing 29 woodland areas. Over the last four years 51 sites have been worked on in 21 of the woodland areas. Once the programme has achieved its targets, a review will evaluate the completed work and identify next steps.

A holly management update will feature in the next Board Update.

Restoration of A&O woodlands: PR serial no. 2201

HLS is funding the restoration of ancient and ornamental (A&O) oak and beech woodlands by removing conifer trees and other non-natives. Forestry England applies the following principles put forward by Natural England: fell any conifers shading veteran trees; fell regenerating conifer; fell conifer growing amongst young oak and beech; and restore glades or edges of lawns and heathland where conifer have colonised open areas. This will also allow the woodland to naturally expand in future.

Projects in planning stages include:

- Wick Wood
- Knightwood Oak (North Knightwood Inclsoure)
- Little wootton
- Gritnam Wood

Thinning A&O Plots: PR serial no. 2202

HLS is funding a programme of work which aims to restore a more natural woodland structure in old planting areas and regeneration pens in A&O woodlands.

Project for this winter: Gritnam Wood

Restoration of species-rich grassland: Option HK7

This option is targeted at dry and wet grasslands and associated permanent and temporary ponds in the Open Forest that are potentially rich in plant and associated animal life. They are sometimes on difficult ground and may have suffered from issues such as drainage, invasive species (including bracken, scrub and non-native species), eutrophication and under/overgrazing.

Lost lawns: PR serial no. 69

HLS is funding the restoration of species-rich grassland that has been encroached by scrub and invasive species. This involves a rolling programme of work targeting sites identified in the Lost Lawns Report (N. Sanderson) to restore glades or edges of lawns and heathland.

Natural England has commissioned some further research with the Fresh Water Habitats Trust to survey and assess the requirements for the management of the Marl Pits. Following these recommendations the HLS team will consult and deliver the works in 2026/ 2027.

Verge Restoration: PR serial no. 70

The HLS funds a Verge Restoration Officer (VRO) who raises awareness of the importance of the verges which are a designated feature of the New Forest's SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). The VRO actively engages with local communities and visitors, patrols and assesses SSSI verges across the HLS agreement area, and plans and oversees practical measures to protect and restore the verges from the damaging impacts of vehicles.

Installation of physical measures are complete at:

- Setley - DTs and ditching
- Burley Cott Lane - barriers and DTs
- Parkhill Lawn, Lyndhurst - ditching and barrier
- Nomansland - ditching

Remedial works will take place at Matley as there have been some issues with the stability of the ditch and bank works. It is likely that the ditches will be infilled and replaced with dragons teeth.

Plans for future sites have been postponed.

Wetland Restoration

Where habitats are unfavourable because of drainage operations (such as in riverine and bog woodland, heathland and mire habitats), restoration of a more natural physical, geomorphological and hydrological regime by agreed management is required. This might include removal of structures which prevent seasonal inundation, raising of (over-deepened) stream bed levels, restoration of braided channels (watercourses with many small channels) and reinstatement of natural meanders. Such works are undertaken as part of the ongoing programme of wetland restoration projects and are guided by the restoration plan agreed by the Freshwater and Wetland Restoration Forum (FWRP).

Planning is underway for several restoration projects due to take place in 2026 including Knightwood where felling along the watercourse is in progress.

HLS Board Meeting Update October 2025- January 2026

Repair and maintenance: PR serial no. 48

Previously restored wetland sites may need further interventions to help restore natural processes. Forestry England carries out an ongoing programme of work to monitor restored sites, identify any issues and implement works to address them.

Over the winter period monitoring of previous sites has been undertaken and plans for repairs are being worked up.

Other wetland sites: PR serial numbers 33, 1801, 42, 2401, 2402, 2403

A programme of mire and stream restoration work that aims to restore the natural hydrology of an area, improve the condition of wet habitats, protect streams and mires from further erosion, help to manage flood risk and increase resilience to drought.

Future wetland sites:

Consultations have occurred for several sites for next year, although some have not been successful, several more consultations will take place over the winter, and planning is underway for further consultations next year.

Update: Forest Freshwater & Wetland Restoration Forum (FWRF)

The Forest Freshwater and Wetland Restoration Forum (FWRF) was set up as an independent and advisory body focused on strategic and long-term freshwater and wetland restoration priorities in the New Forest National Park. Some example objectives include:

- To assist member bodies planning restoration by sharing information, experience and advice
- Help facilitate communication between all stakeholders
- Set strategic level objectives
- Review the Freshwater and Wetland Restoration Plan which creates a framework for delivery of restoration projects

The Wetland Forum are due to meet in February; there has been a nomination of a new independent Chair John Stride.

Heather Baling: PR serial no. 100

N/A

Survey and Monitoring

This includes a programme of specialist species surveys - as directed by Natural England - and a monitoring programme to support our restoration work. Examples of previous specialist species surveys undertaken include those conducted for large marsh grasshopper, brown diving beetle, New Forest cicada and various New Forest spiders. Previous reports can be found [here](#).

Breeding Waders (repeat): PR serial no. 140

Breeding wader surveys were completed across the whole of the SPA (including National Trust and Hampshire County Council land) by the Hampshire Ornithological Society over the summer, using the same methodology as that in the 2019-21 surveys. Surveys took place between April and June and recorded presence of Lapwing, Curlew, Redshank and Snipe.

The final report indicated estimates of 25-29 Curlew, 50-74 Lapwing, 255 Snipe and 2 Redshank breeding territories. Compared to the last survey, an increased number of Snipe territories, but fewer Curlew and Redshank territories were found. Lapwing territories appeared to be relatively stable.

Botanical survey: PR serial no. 25

Habitat and botanical surveys have been conducted on our wetland restoration sites to assess the vegetative response to the restoration of a more naturally functioning watercourse. This is using the vegetation survey protocol which has been developed through the Freshwater and Wetland Restoration Forum and aims to pragmatically collect useful and repeatable data.

Survey work was completed, over the summer, at the following sites:

- Penny Moor
- Picket Mire
- Longdown
- Anderwood
- North Sluffers
- Knightwood
- Lodge Heath

The reports are being finalised, and will be added to the [Habitat and Botanical Surveys](#) page on the HLS website once complete. More information relating to the methods used can be found within the reports and in the [Freshwater and Wetland Restoration Plan](#).

Invertebrate surveys: PR serial no. 2407

Invertebrate surveys have been conducted over the summer, at four sites (North Sluffers, Dockens Water/Rakes Brakes Bottom, Turfhill and Picket Plain). The overall aim of these is to record rare and notable invertebrate species and get an idea of species composition at each site. Both daytime hand searches and light trapping have been used to catch and identify individuals.

So far, a substantial list of species has been produced, including species which have not been recorded in the New Forest for several decades. Once the final surveys have been completed a report will present the results and will be published to the HLS website.

Spider surveys: PR serial no. 191

Repeat spider surveys of those completed at Matley Heath and Shatterford Bottom in [2019](#) (in which several rare and notable spider species were recorded) have been undertaken over the summer. All surveys have been completed, and species identification and report writing will take place over the winter.

Wetland monitoring reports: PR serial no. 2303

Case studies on site-based monitoring have been commissioned for Wootton and Harvestslade. The aim of these is to combine data from various monitoring streams (e.g., Fish and invertebrate surveys, botanical surveys, geomorphological surveys and fixed-point photography surveys) to create a succinct narrative of change report for each site.

The final reports highlight the positive changes that have occurred at both the sites, but reiterate the need for structured and consistent monitoring methods that demonstrate the success of the restoration against pre-determined measures of success. This is being taken forward for future projects.

Fixed point and timelapse photography: PR serial no. 104

A fixed-point and timelapse photography programme is run by the HLS Monitoring Project Officer to document visible habitat changes following restoration.

Water Hydrology: PR serial no. 103

Monitoring water hydrology helps document changes in flow regime and, the impact of river restorations on flow levels and rates.

The HLS monitoring project officer is currently working with the Environment Agency and Fresh Water Habitats Trust to monitor water levels at Foulford Bottom, Knightwood and Millersford.

Riverfly Partnership: PR serial no. 105

Over the last ten years, the HLS scheme has supported the citizen science Riverfly Partnership Project. Volunteers are trained to identify and survey specific groups of freshwater invertebrates, whose diversity and numbers can tell us about the overall health and characteristics of our streams.

Surveys (2025) took place monthly between April and October at Linford Brook and Worts Gutter, although the dry weather meant not all surveys could be completed.



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Verderers' Grazing Scheme
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*Official Verderer
Edward Heron*

**MINUTES OF THE VERDERERS' GRAZING SCHEME MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD
ON 26th NOVEMBER 2025**

Present:

Mr Edward Heron (OV) - Official Verderer
Mr Richard Deakin (RD) - Elected Verderer
Miss Alison Tilbury (AT) - Elected Verderer
Mr Mark Gammon (MG) - Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
Mrs Tina Woodley (TW) - Verderers Grazing Scheme Administrator

Item	Item	Action
1. Apologies	Mr Clive Chatters (CC) - Natural England Appointed Verderer	
2. Declarations of interest	RD & AT declared membership of the VGS. RD is a member of the New Forest Livestock Society. RD is a member of the New Forest Stallion Syndicate RD & AT are members of the New Forest Pony Breeders and Cattle Society. RD is a committee member of the CDA and AT is a member of the CDA CC is an Officer of HIWWT	
3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising	Minutes of the last VGS meeting were approved – TW to sign and upload to website	Action TW
4. VGS 2025 & Commons Contributions 2025	The 2025 VGS forms have been sent out via email with a link for the commoner to complete and submit the form direct to WebCRM database. Many forms have already been returned and TW is pleased with how it is working. Next year should be much easier now all the information has been input onto the system. TW confirmed she has received Bi Lateral Grazing contributions from HCC and Wellow Parish council – This means the 2025 commons pot will be £6855.33	
5. VGS Annual Grants	The VGS Annual grants and actual spend for the year was presented to the committee.	
6. VGS Rule Violations 2025	No Violations to report for 2025	

Commons & Forest VGS numbers 2025

Summary of commons & Forest stock entered in Scheme

2013 – 2025

Year	Registered Ponies	Other Equines	Cattle	Pigs	
Common 2013	291	229	620	1	
Forest 2013	2941	966	2256	283	
Common 2014	266	156	513	1	
Forest 2014	2771	756	2176	139	
Common 2015	215	190	629	8	
Forest 2015	3217	895	2645	322	
Common 2016	203	196	589	18	
Forest 2016	3268	950	3258	163	
Common 2017	194	235	612	37	
Forest 2017	3367	873	3660	293	
Common 2018	240	279	618	32	
Forest 2018	3504	920	3896	313	
Common 2019	232	277	525	136	
Forest 2019	3622	988	3056	411	1219 additional cattle qualified for scheme but not paid out as 40 cap applied
Common 2020	256	279	927	85	
Forest 2020	3615	826	2744	487	1217 additional cattle entered in scheme but not paid out on as 40 cap applied
Common 2021	232	359	970	62	
Forest 2021	3520	895	2846	166	257 additional cattle entered in scheme but not paid out on as 40 cap applied
Common 2022	177	277	640	47	
Forest 2022	362	763	2506	337	188 additional cattle entered in scheme but not paid out on as 40 cap applied
Common 2023	161	260	470	89	
Forest 2023	3739	749	2518	402	79 additional cattle entered in scheme but not paid out on as 40 cap applied
Common 2024	203	227	386	93	
Forest 2024	3777	678	2334	287	22 additional cattle entered in scheme but not paid out on as 40 cap applied
Common 2025	189	206	193	82	
Forest 2025	3908	663	2411	408	45 additional cattle entered in scheme but not paid out on as 40 cap applied

	Common Equines	Cattle	Pigs
Total marking fees for all commons	661	250	93
No's in VGS Common 2025	395	193	82
Total marking fees for all Forest	5049	2564	534
No's in VGS Forest 2025	4571	2456	408

(therefore turned out for 7 months equines, 4 months cattle)

Forest rate 2025 = £119.89 per LU

Common rate 2025 = £15.67 per LU

2025 = 506 members – 479 members received grazing payments

11 cattle commoners not in the VGS – 7 of which are new and not yet qualified

VGS Payment rates per LU per Year

YEAR	FOREST RATE	COMMONS RATE
2013	£95	£48
2014	£102.50	£58
2015	£86	£53
2016	£79.79	£56.17
2017	£73.44	£60.67
2018	£69.47	£50.11
2019	£68.63	£51.45
2020	£71.94	£30.96
2021	£73.37	£41.84
2022	£74.01	£53.45
2023	£95.94	£76.43
2024	£96.56	£87.30
2025	£119.89	£15.67

Uplift to VGS rate applied in 2025 and Cattle supplement VGS 2025

Cattle supplement paid

2022 = 70 herds received 2739.72

2023 = 84 herds received 2298.85

2024 = 89 herds received 2247.19

2025 = NOT YET ISSUED – APRIL after TB testing window closes

MEMBERSHIP

2015 = 498 members – 498 members received grazing payments

2016 = 501 members – 432 members received grazing payments

2017 = 493 members – 443 members received grazing payments

2018 = 512 members – 457 members received grazing payments

2019 = 475 members – 452 members received grazing payments

2020 = 482 members – 462 members received grazing payments

2021 = 490 members – 462 members received grazing payments

2022 = 480 members – 476 members received grazing payments

2023 = 469 members – 450 members received grazing payments

2024 = 477 members - 457 members received grazing payments

2025 = 506 members – 479 members received grazing payments

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Report to HLS Board: January 2026

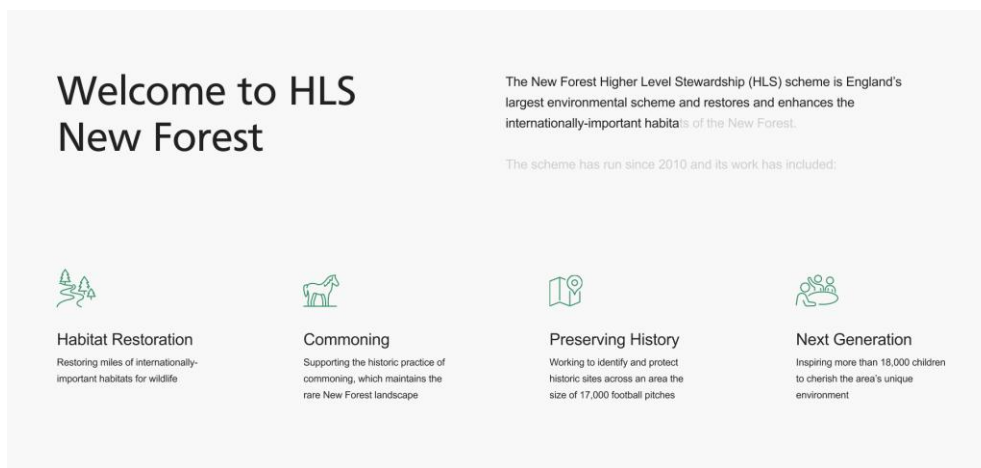
Jonathan Low, Communications Assistant / HLS engagement officer

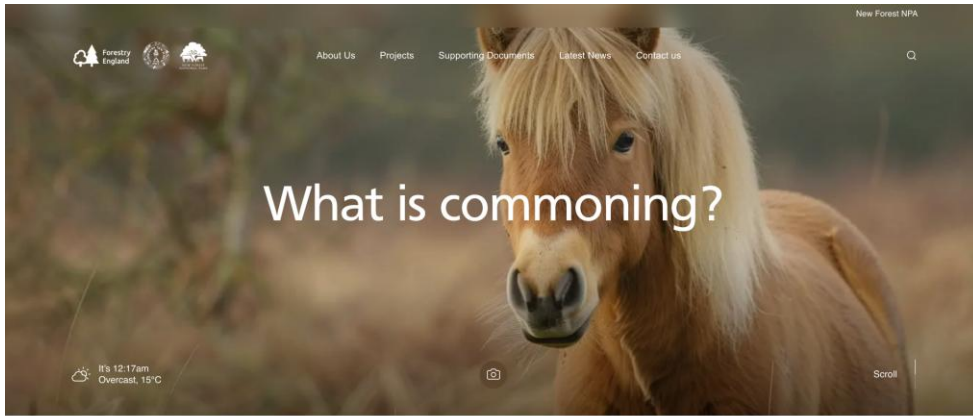
New website

Planning work continues ahead of the new website, which is due to be launched in March.

Representatives from the NPA, FE and Tina Woodley have held meetings to discuss the relevant content for the site.

Below are some mock-ups of the new site (please note – all images and text can be changed, this is just a general idea of designs and what functionality is available).





Commoners of the New Forest are people who occupy property to which attaches one or more rights over the forest and/or adjacent commons.

There are six registered Common Rights:

Photos/Video

The NPA has commissioned local photographer and videographer Matt Roseveare to capture a range of images and videos showcasing HLS sites/work, species and landscapes.

A few examples of his work can be seen below.

Forestry England HLS site at Allum Green



Pony grazing at Penny Moor



Forestry England HLS site at Penny Moor



Forestry England officer Suzi Egleston carrying out HLS drainage work



Stakeholder briefings

Forestry England updates on recent and forthcoming HLS works at parish council quadrants and consultative panel.

Coming up

Full focus is on sorting out content for the new HLS website ahead of launch.

We also plan to write a round-up article, highlighting some of the key achievements from 2025 for the HLS scheme.

Compile several case studies to help showcase HLS work on the new website.

Promotion around the AGM later in the year (date to be confirmed).

**NEW FOREST NON-NATIVE PLANTS PROJECT
REPORT TO
THE NEW FOREST HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME
BOARD MEETING TO BE HELD ON 28 January 2026**

This report outlines relevant activities of the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project since the previous report dated 14 October 2025 which was submitted for the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme (HLS) Board meeting held on 29 October 2025.

Planning the control of invasive non-native plants to be undertaken by contractors during 2026

The following work is being planned to be undertaken by professional contractors to control invasive non-native plants on the Open Forest on Crown Land during 2026. Quotes have been obtained for all sites and purchase orders will be sent out in early April.

Japanese knotweed

- Near Thorney Hill. £195 + VAT
- Near 'Leafy Screen', Burley. £195 + VAT
- Near 'Hillview' at Linwood. £85 + VAT

American skunk cabbage

- Mill Lawn, Burley (downstream of Rooks Bridge). £440 + VAT

Yellow Azalea

- Near The Old House. £450 + VAT
- Soarley Beeches. £210 + VAT

Parrot's Feather

Hincheslea Bog, East End and Silver Stream – 3 treatments to be undertaken.

- Early summer £585.30 + VAT
- Mid-summer £585.30 + VAT
- Late summer £585.30 + VAT

Cotoneaster

- Hawkhill car park. £859.95 + VAT
- Slufers. £155 + VAT
- Ocknell. £850 + VAT
- Near Bramble Hill Hotel. £320 + VAT
- North of Hatchet Pond. £85 + VAT
- Rans Wood. £850 + VAT
- Setley Plain. £220 + VAT
- Setley Pond. £240 + VAT
- Vicinity of Little Hatchet Pond & Hatchet Moor car park. £395 + VAT
- North of A31, near Minstead.
- Near Rufus Stone car park
- Near Shatterford car park

- East of Avon Water
- Horseshoe Bottom
- By post box at Emery Down. £1064.28 + VAT (*combined quote with the above 5 sites*)
- Pilmore Gate Heath & Acres Down. £210 + VAT
- Boundway Hill. £195 + VAT

Gaultheria

- South of Fletcher's Hill. £610 + VAT
- Dibden. £1620.52 + VAT

Recording invasive non-native plants

On 12 December 2025 a survey was conducted along the B3078 Roger Penny Way where 5 significant clumps of *Cotoneaster horizontalis* were found and recorded.

On 12 December 2025 a separate survey was conducted in the vicinity of Eyeworth Pond where 40 *Cotoneaster* and 1 Himalayan honeysuckle were recorded.

These two sites will be added on to the programme of works for herbicide treatment during summer 2026 once quotes have been received.

Control of invasive non-native plants by Project Officer and volunteers

On 18 November 2025, Thorn Apple was reported growing along the fence line at Denny Wood. This was removed by the Project Officer.

Other Activities

Meetings

05/11/25 - Area team meeting & White-tailed Eagle talk (FE) Blashford Lakes

11/11/25 - Trace Cooper-Williams – Testwood Lakes

13/11/25 - Andy Payne Volunteer Leader – Lymington

01/12/25 - Ben Francis APHA, New Forest LAG Introduction – Via Teams

01/12/25 – Trace Cooper-Williams – Testwood Lakes

10/12/25 – All staff Christmas meeting – Biddenfield Farm, Shedfield

19/11/25 – Trace Cooper-Williams - Budget Prep

17/12/25 – Area team Christmas meeting – Keyhaven Marshes

Inductions

06/11/25 - Health & Safety

07/11/25 - IT/Facilities

07/11/25 - Membership & Fundraising

11/11/25 - Human Resources

12/11/25 - Marketing

13/11/25 - Sustainability

19/11/25 - GDPR

26/11/25 - Finance

11/12/25 - Safeguarding

Mandatory Training (online)

23/10/25 – Manual Handling

23/10/25 – Bullying & Harassment for Employees

27/10/25 – Security Awareness

27/10/25 – Phishing

27/10/25 – Sexual Harassment Awareness

27/10/25 – GDPR

27/10/25 – Equality, Diversity, Inclusion

27/10/25 – Environmental Awareness

27/10/25 – Display Screen Equipment

27/10/25 – App Permissions

31/10/25 – Fire Awareness

03/11/25 – Mental Health Awareness

03/11/25 – Essential Health & Safety

04/11/25 – Safeguarding

Role Specific Training

18/11/25 – Conflict Management – Beechcroft House, Curdridge

23/11/25 – Water Safety

24/11/25 – 25/11/25 – Emergency First Aid (2 Day)

02/12/25 – Invasive Non-Native Species Module 1 Certificate

02/12/25 – Invasive Non-Native Species Module 2a Certificate

GIS/Producing maps

Ordering/updating PPE and equipment for volunteer leads



**Hampshire &
Isle of Wight**
Wildlife Trust

The New Forest Non-Native Plants Project, hosted by Hampshire & Isle of Wildlife Trust, is very grateful to The Verderers and the New Forest HLS Board for the continued financial support given by the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme.

Report prepared by Holly Fitzgerald, New Forest Non-Native Plants Officer
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06 January 2026

260106 Report from HIWWT for HLS Board Meeting on 31 January 2026 HF

LiDAR and Archaeology Report

January 2026 Board Meeting

Report by: Gareth Owen

HLS Archaeology and Heritage Team:

Since the Oct 2025 Board meeting the team has been continuing with ongoing works and responding to new requests from FE HLS Team.

The team received nine new requests, concluded seven and progressed ongoing request for advice, Data Packs (Heritage Impact Assessments) and site mark-ups ahead of ground works such as Stream/Wetland Restoration, Habitat Regeneration and Clear-fell Restoration.

Requests received during this period include; Gritnam Wood, Fawley Inclosure, Black Knowl, Blackensford Botton, Shirley Holms and Dipden.

Concluded requests with Data packs issued include; Lodge Heath, Highland Water Phase 2, Knightwood Inclosure North, Knightwood Inclosure South and Knightwood Inclosure Wetland Restoration.

Conducting these heritage assessments ahead of groundwork provides ongoing opportunities to identify, record and protect a range of heritage assets within the New Forest that could easily be damaged by the heavy vehicles used in some HLS restoration works. It also facilitates the ongoing detailed assessment of LiDAR data of the New Forest which has often led to new archaeological discoveries.

The findings from this work are added to our growing heritage GIS database, currently holding details on over 4500 individual heritage assets recorded through HLS work. Following completion of a site assessment the data is subsequently submitted to the Hampshire Historic Environment Records, to share our growing understanding of and promote further research into the heritage of the New Forest.

NEW FOREST LAND ADVICE SERVICE

Report to HLS Board meeting January 2026

Progress and Work Programme 1st Oct to 31st Dec 2025

Report by: NFLAS

This report summarises the work completed by the New Forest Land Advice Service

Proactive work with commoners to deliver land management advice.

Support to understand and comply with relevant practices such as Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition and HLS related objectives. **8**

Advice to commoners where HLS land adjacent to their holdings is being affected by inappropriate operations or management, to advise and promote best practice land management. **6**

NFLAS support

NE / CSF/ FE hosted event on the 18/11/25 to update the New Forest community on grant opportunity– I was asked to attend to support any queries regarding land advice for commoners, tenants, and landowners.

The event was advertised to all commoners and the Southern Cluster FFCS that I facilitate who are 50% commoners.

HLS Commoner Training program:

Organising the next event was discussed during the quarter. However, training was delayed for the winter after practical consideration. Alex and I are now in the planning stage for the spring.

The Verderer questionnaire including an interest in learning about cattle calving for stock on the open forest –

We are now designing a farmyard / power point talk intended to work with smaller groups. If the uptake is sizable, we will look to run the same event across the forest at two different holdings. Delivery timing for different audiences will also be considered from young commoner feedback. This will hopefully encourage further interest in keeping cattle for the open forest.

Other commoner related work.

This item is separate to the HLS funding but have included to represent the cross over NFLAS has with projects supporting commoners across the forest.

New forest southern cluster

Fungi identification FFCS November, ID walk and evening presentation. This formed part of the 3-year facilitation scheme focusing on education within the cluster area.

8 commoners in attendance from the group.

Farming in protected landscapes

Various commoners have been guided individually through the funding opportunity for 2025 – 26.

Further funding is still available for qualifying projects if deliverability in the short time frame to March 2026.

Other funding for commoners:

I have worked with 2 commoners holdings this winter negotiating EA WEIF funding and commoner contribution towards the projects. Both are adjacent to water courses associated with the open forest or adjacent to SSSI's. Water quality is the focus – diverting clean roof water away from the livestock yards to reduce water contamination.

Rainwater harvesting will be supported at both locations to reduce water costs along with re-concreting old feed areas to help the commoners with FYM clean-up operations.

10> holdings have been supported through the program over the past few years, upgrading farmsteads / reduce pollution risk - I find this a particularly useful tool helping the commoning community with direct payment ability. Unlike many of the others with the claim back process.

Signposting continues to support the commoners depending on the questions asked.