**Presentment Court of Verderers April 2022**

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**The New Forest Commoners Defence Association**

The NFCDA wishes to express our concerns over a recent event which took place at Nomansland.

It is our understanding that a Nomansland resident applied to Forestry England to create a larger, more direct driveway to a new gate located on their property. This required creating a cutting and laying a new base through virgin forest ground. The existing drive was removed, and soil imported to cover it. The original drive, now covered in imported soil, is being trodden and compacted by stock. New vegetation has little chance to become established.

We believe that the work commenced before any agreement was given from FE, we also understand that the proposed development would require the appropriate planning permission from the NFNPA.

Our main concerns are:

1. As properties are enlarged, with more vehicles, this practice could set an example to other residents in the area and across the forest.
2. The loss of established grass lawns and the bare banks created by the cutting in, have created a negative impact on the forest and subsequent grazing.
3. Works, such as this, need to be carefully considered if we are to achieve a biodiversity net gain, and avoid further loss and damage to the protected landscape.

The NFCDA ask the court for further clarification on the following points?

Does this work require a permit from FE? And if so, would it be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment? had this been undertaken?

Does the proposed driveway require planning permission from the NFNPA? And if so, what is the is the status? And how will the LPA ensure there is no net loss of grazing and biodiversity?

In 2020 the New Forest NPA declared a nature emergency, FE has a plan for wildlife which includes “continuing action to protect, improve and build the resilience of our most special habitats, including ancient woodlands and Sites of Special Scientific Interest”.

We ask that those authorities responsible for protecting the New Forest adhere to their plans and statements, and therefore will be taking the necessary and appropriate action.

The New Forest Commoners’ Defence Association Contact:

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