

Verderers Court: **Wednesday 17th September**  2025

Presentment x 2 Pannage extension and railway fencing.

Good morning Official Verderer, Verderers, and members of the Court.

Andrew Parry-Norton CDA Chairman.

Pannage

This year is an exceptional year for acorns, a lot have fallen over the last couple of weeks. The CDA did request that the season be brought forward but unfortunately that didn’t happen.

The main crop of acorns is still to fall, a serious risk to our cattle and ponies. We request that the Pannage season is extended until the New Year.

Railway Fencing.

In May this year, one of our member’s had a steer hit by a train near Sway, the train driver was not aware that he had hit the animal. It was found by a walker and reported.

Network rail are claiming the fencing was inspected in December 2024 and met their standards. They claim no liability and therefore will not compensate the Commoner.

Several of our members have inspected the fence line; it is in a very poor state and almost non-existent in some places. We have photographic images to show this. The poor condition of this fence has certainly not happened in the time since Network Rail’s last alleged inspection, evidence suggests that the rusted wire and snapped posts have been there for some considerable time.

The dilapidated state of this fencing could have severe consequences; the stock on the Forest near these rail lines are not safe; cattle and ponies can easily access the tracks. The plentiful grazing on the embankments entices the stock to simply step over the fence line especially following the recent drought conditions.

We are concerned that without adequate fencing, dogs and children can simply walk on to the train lines with very little to stop them.

There are recorded instances where cattle; hit by a train has caused it to derail.

As the evidence suggests, Network Rail appears to have little regard for our stock, the public and its passengers.

Network Rail has failed to fulfill their statutory duties under Section 68 of the Railways Clauses Consolidation Act 1845

As a matter of extreme urgency we ask the Verderers to join with us, the CDA, by putting pressure on Network Rail to admit liability for the Commoners steer and immediately replace the railway fencing throughout the Forest before any further stock and potentially peoples lives, are put at risk.

Thank you.