

31 July 2025

FORESTRY COMMISSION APPOINTED VERDERER OF THE NEW FOREST**1. Purpose**

To seek the Commissioners' agreement to the reappointment of Mark Gammon for a further three-year term as the Forestry Commission appointed Verderer of the New Forest.

2. Background/Introduction

The Verderers of the New Forest (www.verderers.org.uk) derive their offices, powers and responsibilities from the various New Forest Acts. They consist of the Official Verderer who is Chairman, five elected Verderers who represent the commoners and four appointed Verderers (one each appointed by the Forestry Commission, Defra, Natural England and New Forest National Park Authority).

The Verderers responsibilities extend to the commonable lands of the New Forest. Within that area the Verderers main task is to ensure that the owners of the animals out on the forest exercise their rights in a responsible and proper manner, and in keeping with the highest standards of animal welfare.

In addition to administration of Common rights, the Verderers have powers to determine certain activities that may take place on the commonable lands. Typically these activities will include requests from the Forestry Commission which involve interference with the common grazing, for example, gas connections to private households, major works on the Open Forest or certain recreation activities.

They also have certain magisterial functions as a Court in connection with offences against the Verderers' byelaws. The Verderers meet in session about ten times a year. The appointed Verderers perform an independent role and are not required to represent their appointing organisation.

3. Appointment Process

Commissioners approved the appointment of Mark Gammon following an open competition exercise. He received his appointment letter on 6th July 2022 confirming that

his official term in the role would start on 1st September 2022. This follows the normal 3-year term with the potential for the Commissioners to consider reappointment for up to a maximum of 10 years.

4. Communications

Craig Harrison (Deputy Surveyor) has confirmed that Mark Gammon wishes to be considered for reappointment. Craig's view, based on personal experience working with Mark and feedback from District staff, Verderers and other stakeholders is that he has performed very effectively in the role and therefore has his support.

For further context, Mark Gammon has a legal background with specific knowledge and expertise surrounding wildlife crime. A combination of his legal expertise and diplomacy has help manage the expectations of Verderers well on key issues such as the practical reality of Forestry Commission byelaw enforcement which is commonly raised by New Forest stakeholders.

If the Commissioners support his reappointment a new appointment letter will be issued from the Commissioners Office for a further 3-year term starting on the 1st September 2025. Craig Harrison would be responsible for advising the outcome to the Official Verderer.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Commissioners approve the reappointment of Mark Gammon for a second three-year term.

Crispin Thorn
Secretary to the Commissioners
23 July 2025