

## **Presentment to the Verderers' Court by Elizabeth Potter**

**16 September 2015**

Good morning Official Verderer and Verderers

The reason I have come here today is to tell you about how dangerous and unsightly I find that the area round Broomy has become.

I have been riding here for about 38 years but haven't had a pony to ride for a few months so missed the works when they were going on.

What on earth has been the point of it all? Gone is the stream and its banks and its natural winding beauty and instead there is a dead infilled stone path which is unrideable. Where can the fish swim? There is nowhere and no fish. Few birds too. It is so damaged and spoiled. For the Official Verderer to say that this damage has to happen to improve things in the end is perverse. So much has been destroyed, there must be a better and less destructive way to achieve wetland restoration. It is also perverse to do work which has disturbed so much in the bird breeding season. This is not respecting the needs of this special place, The New Forest.

It is also dangerous. We had some heavy rain a couple of weeks ago and the water appeared within the flinty stones. It was impossible to know how far into the ground my horse's feet would go. She is inexperienced but walked obediently through though sinking down. There used to be a really well built small wooden bridge which had very good footing.

Had I been galloping as one might on a drift or when hunting or when the wild ponies just feel like it, then a leg could be broken because the horse doesn't know how firm the impact with the ground will be. It is a change of impact that causes racehorses to break a leg. Jumping over a ditch is not the problem but setting up false ground as has been done here is a really dangerous and badly planned thing to do. When I tried to avoid the crossing I encountered heather bales and twine which have come to the surface already.

I talked to various people at the New Forest Show and asked them if they had seen what has been done. Several said "No". But if you haven't been there you are not in a position to say it is OK.

It is not OK. Dreadful damage has been done and much habitat seriously compromised. Go and see for yourselves.