

## **REPORT OF THE HEAD DOWNSKEEPER**

<u>Report of the:</u>	Head Downskeeper
<u>Contact:</u>	Robert Harding
<u>Annexes/Appendices (attached):</u>	None
<u>Other available papers (not attached):</u>	N/A

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

**To receive the report of the Head Downskeeper.**

#### **1 Events**

- 1.1 Events held during the period have principally been of the Cross Country and Road Race variety, and while several were held in appalling weather conditions, they have passed without concern to the Downskeepers.

#### **2 Winter Work Programme**

- 2.1 The Winter Work Programme is effectively at an end. The priority areas at Riflebutts Alley, Langley Vale and Middle Hill have been completed and a very productive winter has seen many additional projects accomplished. Worthy of mention is the thinning of woodland to encourage recreational use and the creation of deadwood habitat piles for ecological and educational purposes. Additionally the re-establishment of a viable coppicing programme holds great promise.

#### **3 Hack Post Refurbishment**

- 3.1 Work to refurbish hack posts has been highly successful, with the sign posting much improved. The materials used were all reclaimed wood and the sign writing has been carried out in-house by the Downskeepers.

#### **4 Dog Control**

- 4.1 The new Dogs on Leads initiative went live on Monday 25 January. Notwithstanding the need for Downskeepers and Gallops staff to remain vigilant, the response from Downs users has been very encouraging. The training community have expressed their gratitude to all and have been impressed by the way this ground breaking scheme has been embraced by the vast majority. The Head Downskeeper wishes to express his thanks to the Rangers who patrolled the Downs during the formative days of the programme, informing Downs users of the changes.