



Dartmoor
Hill Farm Project

INTERIM NEWSLETTER June 2017

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thurs 8th – Sat 10th June – Royal Cornwall Show

Thurs 15th June – IT Training with Learn Devon. Every Thurs for 5 weeks.

Free I.T sessions for the over 50s at the Dartmoor Prison IT Suite. This is a 5 session course starting 15th June, 10.30-12.30pm and then at the same time for the 4 weeks following. Please contact the office to book a place.

Tues 20th June – NSA Sheep South West

Mon 31st July to Sunday 6th August – National Countryside Week

National Countryside Week is The Prince's Countryside Fund's annual awareness week and will take place from Monday 31st July to Sunday 6th August 2017 [See inside for more info](#)

Postponed until Autumn – Health and Safety Course (Classroom)

Half day training course. Classroom session at DHFP Office, Princetown. Full cost £80pp + VAT. Discounted cost for DHFP contributors: £50pp + VAT. Please call the office to book your place.

Postponed until Autumn – Health and Safety Course (On Farm)

Only for those who have completed the Introduction to Health & Safety course. Make a start on your farm risk assessments on this practical course which presents the huge task in bite size pieces. Feedback from the last course we ran was excellent! Full Cost £80+ VAT, DHFP Contributors £35 + VAT.



Dartmoor Hill Farm Project Contacts

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Find us on Facebook

Cross Compliance Key Dates (June, July, August)

August

1st If you have been granted a derogation by RPA, you may be able to cut or trim hedges throughout August and to sow oilseed rape or temporary grassland. (GAEC 7a)

1st Start of closed period for applying organic manure with a high readily available nitrogen content (for example, slurry, poultry manures or liquid digested sewage sludge) to tillage land on shallow or sandy soils except where crops will be sown on or before 15 September. (SMR 1)

(Source Cross Compliance 2017 Handbook)

Common land

You must meet the relevant rules across the whole of your holding, regardless of the amount of land you entered into the schemes.

This includes common land which you exercise or hold rights of common over. It also applies to all land including forestry for which payments are claimed under rural development schemes.



Updated Livestock Record Keeping Templates

The updated livestock record keeping templates can be found on the **Environmental Stewardship** page at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-stewardship-livestock-record-keeping>

DHFP Training Co-Ordinator

The interviews for the new position of HFP Training Co-Ordinator are going ahead in a couple of weeks. The successful candidate will start later on this year, working 4 days a week out of the Princetown office.

DHFP Steering Group Update

The applications for becoming a DHFP steering group member have now closed and the first meeting is being held on Wednesday 7th June.

The members at this moment in time are: Russell Ashford, Lloyd Mortimore, Ed Pollard, Alison Geen, Margaret Rogers, Collin Abel, Layland Branfield, John Malseed, Gordon Mortimore, Tom Stratton, Sandra Dodd, Kevin Bishop/Ally Kohler and Chris Giles.

If you have any questions about this or you would like to put to the members then please contact the HFP Office.

National Countryside Week

National Countryside Week is the Prince's Countryside Fund's annual awareness week and will take place from Monday 31st July to Sunday 6th August 2017. Every year the campaign aims to raise awareness and celebrate the values of the countryside. We have been asked to use the week to highlight the work that the PCF has enabled the DHFP to do. We would like to showcase some of the opportunities that farmers and their businesses have had as well as engaging with the wider audience of visitors and locals. If you have thoughts on how to engage (walks, talks, demonstrations etc...) please contact the office.

Ash Dieback

The Devon Ash Dieback Resilience Forum is looking to understand how the loss of Ash trees, as a result of dieback disease, is likely to affect the character and scenic qualities of the Devon Countryside. We are asking for you to help by submitting some photos that can be altered to show how the landscape will be impacted by Ash dieback. Our aim is to produce before and after photos that demonstrate likely impact.

Please send across any **high quality** photos (Maximum of 3) you have of **Devon landscapes in which Ash trees play an important part**. Deadline = July 10th.

Email the photos to nature@devon.gov.uk along with details of the location that the photos were taken.

(Devon Local Nature Partnership)

THE FUTURE OF FARMING – POLICY PROPOSALS FROM NATIONAL PARKS ENGLAND

National Parks England (NPE) is an association of the 10 National Park Authorities in England. In response to Brexit, NPE has produced a policy paper regarding the future of farming in National Parks, recognising the important role that farming has in delivering national park purposes. Central to the policy ideas contained in the paper is the concept of locally-led agri-environment schemes.

The NPE policy paper (see Appendix 1) is centred around three, linked components:

1. A National Park FARM (Farming and Rural Management) Scheme to provide a base or foundation level of environmental husbandry and public goods.
2. FARM Plus – locally-led agri-environment schemes for each National Park
3. Wider Rural Development – local resources for wider rural development

It is recognised that other important elements, such as trade deals, will help determine the viability of farming systems in our National Parks and have a potentially significant impact on our landscapes.

The NPE Policy Paper was written by a group Chaired by Jim Bailey (landowner and farmer from North York Moors National Park); Neil Heseltine (farmer, Yorkshire Dales National Park); Robin Milton (farmer, Exmoor National Park); Sebastian Anstruthers (farmer and landowner from South Downs National Park); Adrian Shepherd (Head of Land Management at Yorkshire Dales National Park) and Kevin Bishop (lead chief executive for the English National Parks on agriculture and rural development).

1. *National Park FARM (Farming and Rural Management) Scheme*

The proposals recognise that it is important that we have a base level of environmental management and retain the skills of the farming community to deliver this (The ‘National Park FARM Scheme’) In return for a base level payment there would be certain management obligations (tailored to each National Park) and elements of cross compliance. People who enter into this scheme would also be eligible for farm business advice to produce an integrated farm plan (linking environment and business) and to act as a baseline for the scheme. This builds on the experience of the Dartmoor and Exmoor Hill Farm Projects and work in the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors on farm business plans and innovation. It integrates economy and environment and addresses one of the weaknesses of the current delivery system.

The Scheme would seek to develop the National Park brand ie those signing up could use the National Park logo to symbolise that they are contributing to the management of our National Park landscapes; building a link between the farmers who manage the land and the millions who enjoy the landscape. Thus, this FARM Scheme could develop the National Park food economy – supporting local food chains and enhancing ‘sense of place’ for both producers and consumers, including visitors to the National Parks.

2. *National Park ‘FARM Plus’ - Locally-led Agri-environment Schemes*

As part of the FARM Scheme it is proposed that there should be a higher level, locally-led agri-environment scheme – ‘FARM Plus’. The foundation level FARM

scheme would be open to all and ensure a base level of good environmental management and husbandry. FARM Plus would be focused on enhanced levels of environmental management to deliver public goods. It would be voluntary.

These schemes would be focused on delivering multiple environmental benefits with options that allow for delivery of:

- Landscape
- Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Carbon management
- Water management
- Woodland management (and creation)
- Historic environment
- Access and education
- Whilst also facilitating the production of high quality food through sustainable farming systems

The aim is to maximise delivery across all these benefits rather than a narrow focus on one or two and to allow local flexibility in setting priorities. A scheme that focuses on local needs and opportunities whilst recognising national priorities; encourages collaboration; is outcome focused; evidence based (ensuring that monitoring results are understood and used by the farming community to inform management); offer multi-year agreements with the length of agreements related to the outcomes being delivered; include the potential for capital as well as revenue payments; and provide the opportunity to integrate private sector payments for natural capital/ecosystem services alongside public payments.

There is an opportunity to promote this Scheme through the public engagement work of the National Park Authorities. Ensuring that the 90m visitors to our National Parks each year understand the role that the farming community play in managing the National Parks for the benefit of all.

3. *Wider Rural Development*

A key part of the vision that NPE has developed is for local delivery of integrated solutions to deliver a triple dividend: enhanced environment, improved productivity and farm profitability and more vibrant communities. To achieve this would mean resources for wider rural development. Too often England has developed a linear, top-down approach to rural development. The experience of delivering the Sustainable Development Fund, facilitating partnerships to agree a vision for each National Park and a management plan to deliver that vision, demonstrates the value of networked rural partnerships. National Park Authorities are well placed to facilitate community-led local development programmes that link environment, economy and community. These programmes would include grants and possibly loans and there should also be the opportunity for revenue spend.

What might this look like on Dartmoor?

Dartmoor National Park Authority has agreed to establish a small task and finish group to develop the NPE proposals in more detail using Dartmoor as a case study. These proposals could then assist Defra and its agencies in thinking about farm

support post EU exit. The Dartmoor task and finish group will be chaired by Maurice Retallick and will draw membership from:

- Active farmers (across the age range)
- Dartmoor Commoners' Council, landowners and tenants
- Non-governmental groups

Conclusion

Brexit provides an opportunity to shape a new approach to farm support and rural development – one that integrates farm profitability with environmental delivery and wider rural development. NPE have already developed high-level proposals for Farming in the National Parks. The purpose of the proposed task and finish group is to develop these proposals further and consider what such a scheme might look like for Dartmoor.

Agri-Environment Schemes and TB (by Jane Stewart)

Natural England Advisers are very aware of the sensitive issues and difficulties that all Dartmoor farmers face relating to TB in cattle. Advisers want to help the farming community as much as we can, so we thought it might be useful to highlight the Agri-Environment scheme processes whilst under TB restrictions:

- NE is aware that some people think that TB is classed as Force Majeure under Agri-environment schemes, but this is **NOT** the case and we would like to help ensure you don't fall foul of the rules.
- It is the individual grazier/farmer's responsibility to inform the Commons Association Secretary when their holding is under TB restrictions because this could affect the HLS stocking calendar, and/or the HLS agreement. The common's association should then contact their NE Adviser for advice.
- If the cattle grazing number of the HLS stocking calendar falls below the minimum we ask the common's association to inform their NE Adviser as soon as possible so that a one-time derogation can be put in place. This will help to prevent nasty surprises such as penalties from an RPA Inspection or a breach to the agreement.

We understand that the farming community may think this is more paperwork and process at a highly stressful time for them, but we hope our message is that we are here to help. By working together, I hope we can ensure that everyone is advised in the correct way and that graziers/farmers or commons associations feel supported through each step, to ensure that they are not penalised.

If you would like any advice or support, please contact Jane Stuart on Tel: 07733208816 or email: jane.stuart@naturalengland.org.uk

If you have a Question About TB

At a meeting with APHA earlier this month, one of the issues raised was that some farmers are having difficulties contacting them (using the 3000 number). To try and mitigate this, here is the mailbox that the team use for the Commons work:

SWEnglandTBCommons (APHA) SWEnglandTBCommons@apha.gsi.gov.uk

This mailbox is monitored, as regularly as other work allows, by Jenny, Manuel or Maria (“commons vets”) and Rory (admin). When something is very urgent I would not rely just on an email, but would (also) call the office 03000 200 301.

Jenny, Manuel or Maria assured the members of the meeting that they are very committed to the commons work, that they appreciate the importance of the commons to the commoners and vice-versa, and that they will work closely with all farmers to ensure that everyone can make use of their rights to the common while, at the same time, minimising the risk of cattle catching Tb.

We would be interested in hearing from you about the responses you have.

NHS Health Checks

The free NHS Health Checks held on Tuesday 23rd May at the Duchy Hotel were a success, with all places booked throughout the day. The 2 nurses are keen to hold another session if the interest is there. Please let us know if you would like to attend.

All the Better for Moorland Butterflies (by Simon Phelps)

Wildlife charity Butterfly Conservation has been awarded funding for their new ‘*All the Moor Butterflies*’ project by the Heritage Lottery Fund. These funds will help to restore and create habitat for the High Brown Fritillary, Heath Fritillary, Marsh Fritillary on some of the UK’s most famous moorland landscapes – Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin Moor. These three butterflies are in serious decline due to habitat loss and changes in land management, with a 70% reduction in their distribution recorded over the last 40 years. The Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth will also benefit from the work of the project.

The ‘*All the Moor Butterflies*’ project will help volunteers, landowners and members of the public to learn more about these charismatic species and discover how they can help them recover and thrive. Training days, guided walks, butterfly surveys and conservation work parties will be held across Devon, Cornwall and Somerset over the next three years offering new opportunities for local people to get involved with Butterfly Conservation and the project.

The main target species for Dartmoor are the Pearl-bordered Fritillary, High Brown Fritillary and the Marsh Fritillary. These species occupy two different habitat types; south facing bracken slopes and wet grassland rhos pasture. The project currently has a network of over 100 sites that it is working on across Dartmoor. The project provides support to the landowners, helping them with managing their land to benefit the target species, as well as carrying out annual surveys to monitor how the butterflies are doing.

If you feel that you might have any of these species or habitats on your land and would like someone from the project to visit you, please get in touch. We would be happy to come out and meet with you to survey your land and let you know if you have the species, or if you have potential to have them in the future.

We are incredibly excited to be delivering this project, and grateful to the many organisations, such as the Dartmoor National Park Authority, who have provided additional funding support to the project. If you would like to find out more about the project and how you can get involved, please contact Simon Phelps, Conservation Officer at sphelps@butterfly-conservation.org



Marsh Fritillary



Pearl Bordered Fritillary

Moorskills

Following a productive meeting of the Moorskills directors, it was agreed to support apprentices next autumn, offering farmer's sons, daughters and workers the opportunity to gain a range of skills and traditions vital to the farming of Dartmoor which are not available through the generic courses of agricultural colleges in the South West.

If you are interested please contact the DHFP office for further information.

FEC PAC

Farmers can hire one of our two **FECPAKs** for 3 months to see how you get on with checking the worm burden of your sheep on farm. You pay a deposit of £30 and you get the support of a farmer mentor to show you how to set it up and use it. It allows easy faecal egg count processing to happen on farm, which in turn allows a quicker response to the use of drenches.

Next Full Newsletter

The next full newsletter will be out in August 2017. Please let us know if there is anything you would like to include, or if you would like to take out an advertisement. Please call 01822 890913 for more information.

The Farming Community Network

Helping farming people through difficult times
Open 7.00am – 11.00pm every day of the year

03000 111 999

chris@fcn.org.uk www.fcn.org.uk

ARC – Addington Fund

Supporting Britain's Farming Communities

02476 690587

enquiries@arc-addingtonfund.org.uk
www.arc-addingtonfund.org.uk

Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution

Supporting Farming Families

General Enquiries: 01865 724931

Welfare Enquiries: 0300 303 7373

info@rabi.org.uk www.rabi.org.uk

The Samaritans

"Talk to us if things are getting to you"

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

UK: 08457 909090

www.samaritans.org

Rural Payments Helpline

03000 200 301

Mon – Fri 8.30am-5.00pm

