

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR DARTMOOR PONY ACTION GROUP

Title

The Group shall be known as the Pony Action Group (PAG)

Introduction/background

The Pony Action Group (PAG) was formed in the winter of 2009 by Natural England and Dartmoor National Park Authority, who through their respective Joint Action Plan were concerned about declining numbers of ponies on Dartmoor. They invited and brought together the three statutory bodies to work alongside various pony groups and specific individuals on Dartmoor who have an interest in pony keeping and their direct management.

The group comprises of the three statutory bodies: Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA), Natural England (NE), Dartmoor Commoners Council (DaCC), working alongside the Dartmoor Pony Society (DPS), Dartmoor Hill Pony Association (DHPA), Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust (DPHT), Dartmoor Pony Moorland Scheme (overseen by the Duchy of Cornwall (DofC)), Dartmoor Livestock Protection Society (DLPS) and two independent pony keepers.

Role and Responsibilities

The primary role of PAG is to encourage, support and preserve healthy ponies in sustainable numbers that continue to graze on Dartmoor commons and surrounding areas to help maintain its cultural heritage, biodiversity and landscape qualities.

The Group shall engage in constructive dialogue and seek consensus wherever possible. If consensus cannot be achieved, decisions will be made following an open vote (see voting arrangements).

It is important to remember that PAG focusses on the management of ponies grazing on Dartmoor and not the breed type when making decisions.

Membership and leadership

The pony is the emblem of DNPA and as one of the Group's founders it is been agreed that they should be the lead partner. Therefore DNPA will host and Chair PAG meetings however at certain times some meetings might need an independent Chair.

All members of PAG are expected to contribute to the work of the Group, provide advice and make decisions on the basis of what is best for the ponies on Dartmoor, rather than just specific organizational interests or desires.

PAG will produce and agree an Action Plan which will deliver aims and objectives collectively but should not restrict any group from undertaking their individual priorities.

As lead partner the DNPA will put the Terms of Reference, agreed minutes and Action Plan on their website and update them accordingly as agreed at PAG meetings.

Membership of PAG will require a minimum of one person and a maximum of two people per organisation to attend meetings.

Any individual member who has been absent for three consecutive meetings, may be removed as determined by other members of the PAG through the Chair. The lead partner will have the right to review the chairing and membership of the Group if necessary.

Applications from other groups wishing to join PAG will be determined by the present membership.

Meetings

The Group shall meet at least twice a year normally in June and November however this remains flexible and other meetings can be arranged.

All attending organisations are required to produce a written report and provide notice of agenda items to the DNPA two weeks before the meeting.

As lead partner DNPA shall produce:

- An agenda for each meeting and circulate it to all members at least one week beforehand
- Draft minutes of the meeting and circulate them within three weeks to all members who attended meeting for comment. Formal approval of the minutes shall rest with the Group at its next meeting and once completed these will be put on DNPA website

Members of the Group are expected to make decisions on the basis of what is best for ponies collectively, rather than just their particular interest in them.

In circumstances where the Group is unable to reach a consensus each organisation represented will have one vote.