

Dartmoor National Park Authority

Development Management Committee

Public Minutes of Friday 5 September 2025

Present: Will Dracup, Michael Fife Cook, Gay Hill, Mike Jeffery, Jack Major, Sally Morgan, Caroline Mott (Chair), John Nutley, Mark Owen, Guy Pannell, Mark Renders, Stuart Rogers, Mary Seddon, Dan Thomas, Mark Williams, Pamela Woods, Corinne Farrell (Independent Person)

Apologies: Peter Harper, Richard Keeling and Peter Smerdon

Officers in attendance: Dean Kinsella (Director of Spatial Planning), Cath Burnett (Business Support - Minutes)

The Chair welcomed Corinne Farrell (Independent Person), the member of the Press, Hanna Virta (Legal representative from Tozers) and Toby Diggins (speaker) to the meeting. She also welcomed those members of the public listening to the broadcast and those sitting in the public gallery.

The Chair reminded Members of good practice and that the microphones are now set within the ceiling, picking up all conversation.

1634 Declarations of Interest and Contact

Members agreed to declare those interests as set out in the matrix attached to this Agenda (Membership of other Council).

Mr Nutley declared having played golf at Teign Valley many times and attended a public exhibition at Teign Valley Golf Club relating to the proposed development.

Mr Dracup declared receiving an email invitation from the club in March 2024.

There were no other individual declarations of interest.

1635 Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2025

Save for the amendments as detailed below, the public minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2025, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record:

- “The Chair welcomed **Corinne Farrell** (Independent Person)...”
- Minute 1627, paragraph two should read “parish of Buckfastleigh **West**”
- Minute 1630, paragraph 5, bullet point two to read as follows: ‘It is not believed that this will create a precedent for future developments in **the** open countryside as this is so clearly a unique case; surrounded by other properties. **Alternative** uses have been explored with nothing being suggested **or** required. **Affordable** housing **is** required in **the** area **and the** materials to be used....’

1636 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

None.

1637 Applications to be Determined by the Committee

Considered: The Report of the Director of Spatial Planning (NPA/DM/25/013).

Item - Application 1 – 0310/24 Teign Valley Golf Club, Christow, Exeter, Devon, EX6 7PA

Speaker: Toby Diggins, co-director of Digg and Co studio and landscape ecologist for Teign Valley, speaking on behalf of the Applicant

The Director of Spatial Planning presented his report, adding in the following updates, and advised that a Site Visit had taken place on 15 August 2025.

Members of the site inspection panel convened on the site where the Planning Officer outlined the application proposal. Members were shown the locations where the development will take place on the site. The site inspection team raised the following queries:

- Are the listed buildings within the development currently inhabited?
- How does the height of the proposed buildings compare with maximum permitted limits?
- Will the accommodation include kitchen facilities, or will it consist solely of ensuite bedrooms?
- How many jobs will the development create (noting the estimate of 100 jobs – 70 permanent and 30 temporary)?
- Will local tradespeople be used in the construction? (Yes, where possible.)
- Have any local objections been raised?
- Will the entire development remain under single ownership?
- Will there be time restrictions placed on activities within the development?

A further update was provided as follows:

Lead Local Flood Authority response (4 July 2025):

‘Our objection is withdrawn and we have no in-principle objections to the above planning application at this stage, assuming that the following pre-commencement planning conditions are imposed on any approved permission.....’

An overview of Benefits and Disbenefits was shared.

Public participation

Mr Diggins stated that they have worked in and around the National Park for the last 8+ years. He advised that their recent work on Dartmoor aided a group of stakeholders, including the Duchy of Cornwall, Dartmoor National Park, farmers, commoners and conservation bodies to develop the landscape recovery vision for Central Dartmoor. During this project they learnt much about the special qualities of Dartmoor, as demonstrated in this application through conservation and enhancement, education and enjoyment.

He went on to say that this project began when Teign Valley Golf Club was bought by the current owners due to its unviable financial situation. The course was losing thousands of pounds a week. The owners, of who include members who have chaired charities such as the Royal Parks and Tree Council, saw Teign Valley Golf Course for its landscape possibilities and contribution to people and nature. They wish to turn the course into a responsibly managed site, using sport and the natural world to inspire and educate.

He spoke of extensive collaborative working with the National Park for almost 2 years, refining the proposal to deliver a rejuvenated, natural, inclusive and vibrant place of golf and relaxation.

He advised that landscape and ecology are fundamental to the success of Teign Valley Golf Course's future. In the proposals, the landscaping will functionally connect to the wider landscape. Upwards of 27,000 native trees, sourced locally from Moor Trees, and wild grassland seed from donor meadows across the Moor Meadows network, will be used. They will showcase the rich habitats one can find in the wilder places of Dartmoor.

He spoke about Biodiversity Net Gain, having been considered throughout the project, with a view to exceeding objectives and establishing a habitat bank. Within the planning commitment, the applicant has relinquished additional biodiversity units to demonstrate their commitment to ecological enhancement by increasing the Biodiversity Net Gain offer.

70 jobs will be created, boosting employment opportunities for local young people. They hope that communities will benefit from the 'pay to play' model of padel and pickleball courts. They believe this project is a unique opportunity to further the objectives of the National Park, in a way typically unseen by the planning environment.

Mr Diggins was joined by Rory Farr, a representative of the site owners, and Adam Gostling of hgh Consulting, the planning advisors.

During Members questions they raised queries relating to the timing of bringing the application to the Planning Committee, considerations regarding the tests of Major Development, what financial benefits the scheme would bring to the local community, facilities provided by the eco cabins, drainage, lighting and their controls, planning conditions, impact on wildlife, employment and how the golf course would operate.

In response to Member queries, the Director of Spatial Planning and Mr Diggens (with Mr Farr and Mr Gostling) answered as follows:

- The application has been brought to Members before the latest 21-day public consultation period (11.09.2025) due to pressures on timings to get decisions made, the application being subject to a number of rounds of consultation previously and a significant number of responses received already during previous consultations. It was therefore deemed unreasonable to delay to the October meeting.
- The Major Development test is a stringent test to assess whether the impacts of the development are outweighed by the benefits and, environmental harm is minimised.
- There is no financial gain in the s.106 legal agreement. The gain is in significant improvements to, and management of, the landscape. The Biodiversity Net Gain will be secured, managed and maintained for 30 years.
- The cabins each have a shower area and very basic kitchen facilities.
- Specific conditions about biodiversity (e.g. dormice and bats) can be included in the planning conditions. This item is delegated to the Chair to agree on the final wording.
- With regards to light pollution and the opening hours of the padel courts, it is clearer to use specific 'Summer and Winter' opening hours rather than relying on general terms such as 'daylight hours'.
- In relation to light pollution, and to mitigate harm to the cluster of listed buildings locally, the cabins have been designed with overhanging roof structures to minimise light 'spilling' together with landscaping to offer further screening.
- There is an existing building at the top of the site which will be used for storage purposes.
- Conditions are included with regards to Electricity Vehicle Charging Points.
- The course is set up as 2 rounds of 6 holes, allowing players to choose 6, 12 or 18 rounds. The applicant advised that this design is well supported by Golf England and major professional golfers.
- The applicant is seeking to offer employment and apprenticeship opportunities to local young people in greenkeeping and hospitality.
- Public transport to the area is very limited, meaning staff and visitors will be heavily reliant on cars and bicycles.
- Over 50% of cabins will be fully accessible for all. The Clubhouse is fully accessible and has a lift in the new extension.
- With regards to ecology, the area is in good condition.
- The deer will experience some disruption during the construction period and are likely to change their grazing patterns but are unlikely to move away. The Western valley will remain quiet and undisturbed.
- Sewage disposal options are being reviewed, with septic tank option being considered necessary currently.

The Chair recommended splitting the conditions for Members to vote.

Members voted unanimously in support of recommendation (i). Members voted in support of conditions (ii) and (iii), with 4 Members abstaining.

Overall, Members were supportive of the application and commented on the prospect of it stimulating the local economy and creating jobs whilst enhancing the local environment. Some Members advised that they had abstained due to condition (iii), with the consultation period still being open (until 11.09.2025). The Chair advised that, if needed, she will bring any items back to Committee to be discussed further.

Resolved: That, subject to the following conditions, permission be GRANTED as follows:

- (i) Members agreed that the proposed scheme does not constitute Major Development; and
- (ii) The conditions as set out in the report and the completion of a Section 106 Agreement. The Agreement shall secure the provision of a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), to be prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan. The Section 106 shall also secure a Management Plan for the HMMP and require the submission of monitoring reports, in writing, in line with the methodology and frequency specified in the approved HMMP; and
- (iii) Subject to consultation with the Chair of the Development Management Committee, the completion of the statutory 21-day public consultation period, and confirmation that no new material planning considerations, not already addressed, are raised during that process. The Chair will also amend condition 13 to use more specific language to protect local species.

1638 Appointment of Site Inspection Panel and Arrangements for Site Visits

There are no site visits planned but the Director of Spatial Planning asks Members to keep the 19 September 2025 in their diaries, and he will confirm. All site visit dates have been sent out (along with the other meeting dates) to Members' calendars.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 11.45 am.