

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Friday 5 March 2021

Present: K Ball, S Barker, A Cooper, W Dracup, G Gribble, P Harper, G Hill, S Morgan, D Moyse, J Nutley, N Oakley, C Pannell, M Renders, P Sanders, P Smerdon, P Vogel, P Woods

Officers: K Bishop, Chief Executive, (National Park Officer)
A Kohler, Director of Conservation and Communities
D Healy, Head of Business Support
S Hill, Head of Communications and Fundraising

Apologies: J McInnes

Approved leave of absence from the Authority: D Webber

3296 Declarations of Interest

Mr Harper declared an interest in Item 10 on the agenda – National Parks Partnerships Limited Liability Partnership. He advised that, due to his being a Director of the Partnership, he would not take part in any debate, nor would be vote on the recommendations.

3297 Minutes of the Meeting held Friday 5 February 2021

Save for an amendment in minute number 2193, paragraph one, amending the date to read 2 February 2021, the minutes of the meeting held Friday 8 January 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

3298 Chair's Report

The Chair reported that discussions are ongoing regarding the creation of a National Landscapes Service, a recommendation made within the Glover Report. A Task and Finish Group, chaired by Ms Woods, DNPA Chair, has been established under the auspices of National Parks England. The Group is leading work on a National Landscapes Service model that would add value to local management, governance and delivery. Members will be kept up to date.

On 2 March 2021, there was a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group, which was chaired by Sir Gary Streeter MP. The meeting, the first to take place in a while, took a close interest in all of the National Parks and the work that they do, with particular interest in the emerging shape, form and potential responsibilities of the muted National Landscapes Service.

On Thursday 4 March 2021, the Chair took part, as a member of a panel, in shortlisting photographs for the front of a new large scale Ordnance Survey map of Dartmoor. Six were shortlisted; she commented that some of the most striking pictures combined the wildness of Dartmoor as well as the more pastoral side.

A virtual National Park Forum took place on Wednesday 3 March 2021. This went well with interesting presentations from Alison Kohler, Director for Conservation and Communities and Eamon Crowe, Team Leader, Natural England.

3299 Items requiring urgent attention

None.

3300 Public Participation

The Chair invited Mr Kennard to make his representations to the committee.

Mr Kennard thanked the Authority for the opportunity to speak. He stated that his representation was with regard to Item 11 on the agenda, Visitor Management.

With regard to resources available to protect Wistman's Wood and its nationally and internationally important lichen and moss flora, the metaphorical 'protective fence' around the woodland includes persuasion and education. However, resources are currently insufficient in that there would only be enough staff to cover weekends and bank holidays. Resources are required in order to 'complete the fence'. The Glover report is all embracing but highlights the lack of resources relative to the country's nature and natural asset. Mr Glover recommends the Authority's Junior Ranger Scheme, but the Authority's current Ranger Team needs reinforcement and additional resources to achieve these goals. Protection needs to be done fully, no half measures, for the long term. He urged the Authority to seek and obtain a resolution regarding strengthening the situation, to include the outreach vehicle provision, through state funding / grant aid / the landowner or, if necessary, from the Authority's reserves to cover the current year.

With permission from the Chair, Mr Sanders advised Members that, in his role as Devon County Councillor, he and Mr Kennard had been in contact regarding the issues surrounding Wistman's Wood. He wished to record his thanks to Mr Kennard for his efforts and the support of Dartmoor and, specifically, Wistman's Wood.

In response to a Member's query regarding the possibility of public consultation to assist decisions regarding the future of Wistman's Wood, Mr Kennard advised that one of the methods to protect the woodland would be to keep everything as low key as possible; however, this would not meet the needs of the public and their thirst for knowledge about Dartmoor. Greater footfall does damage the wood; however, more urgent action is needed to address the undesirable behaviour, for example, moss art which involves moss being taken from the wood. He reminded Members that one of the lichens is now the international red list; there are only two places where it is now found in this country.

The Chair thanked Mr Kennard for his input.

3301 Draft Business Plan 2021/22

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) (NPA/21/008).

Members were advised that the draft Business Plan for 2021/22 is currently incomplete. Officers have been waiting for the ministerial statement from the

Secretary of State, giving future direction to National Parks. It was indicated that it would be laid before Parliament in December 2020 but nothing, as yet, has been received. The Finance section has not been drafted; the Authority has not yet received notification of National Park Grant (NPG) for 2021/22. Officers are, therefore, planning ahead with considerable uncertainty.

The Business Plan is a strategic document; it does not attempt to cover everything that the Authority does. Rather, it outlines key actions that will take forward the six priorities which have been set. Five of the priorities relate directly to the new National Park Management Plan; the sixth priority relates to the Authority being an excellent organisation and trying to improve services. A common theme throughout all of the key actions is to use the Authority's staff resource, to not only maintain and manage current services, but also to secure additional resources for new work programmes going forward. Much of this work will be undertaken in partnership with other organisations.

There is close correlation between the Business Plan and the priorities previously discussed by Members. The Chief Executive advised that the Authority did bid to Defra for additional resource. This was done during 2020. Bids were made for resources for additional rangers; the Authority requested to be eligible for the Covid Marshall funding which was made available to local authorities. These bids were unsuccessful. To date, the Authority has not managed to secure any additional resources for visitor management. Members were reminded that they had previously approved a new Engagement and Outreach Strategy at the Authority meeting held on 6 November 2020. The challenge now is to secure the funding to take this forward.

Some actions are focussed on the future of agricultural policy and trying to shape an Environmental Land Management system that would be good for Dartmoor and its farmers.

As the country comes out of the current pandemic it will be even more important to work with Dartmoor's communities and businesses; economic development that supports the National park's special qualities is key. The Authority has sought to support local communities through the Community Coronavirus Support Grant; this is being built upon in partnership with the Prince's Countryside Fund. It is hoped that Moor Otters 2 will re-launch when restrictions allow this and this is focused on supporting local businesses

Climate Change is a priority for the Authority and is addressed through a number of the key actions e.g., peatland restoration, natural flood management, proposal for a green transport strategy.

The Draft Business Plan 2021/22 is ambitious; it is clearly linked to national priorities but also focuses on Dartmoor's special qualities and the Authority's role.

Covid restrictions could have an impact of the Authority's ability to deliver the Business Plan. These would be reported to the Audit & Governance Committee.

A Member stated that he welcomed the socio-economic element going forward. Many parishes were very grateful for the Authority's intervention in respect of the

Coronavirus Grant. The forthcoming business link will be very helpful for new, as well as those businesses that have had to temporarily close during the pandemic.

A Member commented, with regard to climate change, he had recently been challenged regarding the Park's desire to become carbon neutral and the forthcoming Moor Otters 2 when the Authority would be 'encouraging people to travel all over the moor' etc.

The Chief Executive advised Members that officers were well aware of the potential tension between carbon emissions and trying to encourage people to enjoy the moor's special qualities. Moor Otters 2 has been designed to ensure that more of the otters are within local communities so that we reduce the need for travel, trails have been put together and it has been designed so that most of the otters can be accessed through public transport. The Authority is also aware that the project is about supporting local communities, raising awareness and raising funds to support positive conservation work within the National Park.

For transparency reasons Mr Ball declared a personal interest in this item, due to the fact that he is a member of the Okehampton Coronavirus Support Group, which had received funds from the Coronavirus Grant Scheme.

The Head of Communications and Fundraising provided reassurance that sustainability had been built into the Moor Otter II project e.g., most sustainable otter spotter.

Mr Sanders proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Mr Harper.

RESOLVED: Members reviewed the draft Business Plan for 2021/22 and delegated authority to the Chief Executive (National Park Officer), in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority, to agree the final version.

3302 2021/22 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022 to 2024

Members received the report of the Head of Business Support (NPA/21/009). She advised Members that Defra has still not yet confirmed NPG for 2021/22. Therefore, if the Authority's settlement is more than flat cash (which is the main assumption used), officers would be able to readdress the call on reserves for the visitor management support included in the budget and, possibly add back some of the rejected bids. An addendum would be brought before Members, detailing the change, at the Authority meeting due in May or June. However, if the settlement is less than flat cash, officers would either have to request the use of further reserve balances or reduce the work programme; a further report would have to be brought back to this committee as soon as possible once the position is known.

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is a key feature of the Authority's forward planning process and it is reviewed annually on a rolling three year basis. It outlines the financial strategy for the services we provide, summarises the resources available (funding and staff capacity) for implementing Business Plan priorities and objectives by creating revenue and capital budget plans and provides an overview of the future financial position of the Authority. The MTFP process is guided by the Authority's Business Plan priorities, the National Park Management Plan (NPMP) and key government policies.

A summary of the revenue budgets for each year of the MTFP is found in appendices 1-3. As the Authority is, once again, only going to receive a one year grant settlement from Defra, years two and three should only be considered as indicative or aspirational at this point in time. The MTFP has been built on an assumption of a flat cash grant settlement from Defra for 2021/22; in real terms that would be a cut in funding.

Section 3.1 of the report sets out the main assumptions used to build the MTFP. Section 5 sets out a proposed standstill position in respect of fees and charges. The table at section 3.3 shows the current budget gap based on these assumptions i.e., for 2021/22 there is a gap of £112,895 (which includes a specific provision for visitor management this year). The table also shows the indicative budget gaps for years two and three; they are £86k and £58k respectively. Section 4 of the report aims to provide Members with more detail about what has been included in the budget, some of the Authority's major projects and what has been rejected (see appendix 4).

The Head of Business Support drew Members' attention to 4.3 viii which summarised the financial resources thought to be needed to support visitor management services this summer (once the covid restrictions are lifted); Members are requested to approve the use of £40k reserves to support this. This figure is included in the budget gap figure quoted of £112,895.

The remaining revenue budget gap for 2021/22 of £72,895 can be met from within the forecast revenue surplus that has arisen during the 2020/21 financial year; this is mainly covid related. Where work programmes have had to be deferred, or have slipped, these are now included in 2021/22 work plans. Using the 2020/21 surplus and drawing an extra £40k from reserves specifically to support visitor management provision this year, enables the Authority to set a balanced revenue budget for 2021/22.

The small capital strategy is set out in section 6 of the report, for approval. The Conservation Works Team needs to replace a vehicle which is to be funded from capital receipts held in reserves. The replacement of the Development Management IT system needs to be progressed as the current system is no longer fit for purpose; it is proposed that this is also funded from reserves. It is proposed that some of the property reserve is used to refurbish the cottage a Higher Uppacott in order that it can be used by conservation volunteers. The reserve that was set aside for Climate Action Plan projects last year has not yet been utilised; Members will be kept up to date as and when projects come forward.

Section 7 of the report describes how and why reserve balances are held and used. Reserve balances are regularly reviewed and a risk based approach is used when making allocations to or from them. The majority of the Authority's reserve balances are earmarked for specific purposes and many result from the carry forward of partnership contributions and match funding. (See appendices 5 & 6).

Reserve balances should be used for the purposes for which they were created; it is not right to build up large reserve balances without good reason. If there are no increases in National Park Grant for a further three years, possibly beyond, this could result in reserve balances being significantly depleted to meet the cost of pay awards and inflation; and this could limit the Authority's ability to grasp new opportunities,

apply for external funding and even affect its ability to deliver on current commitments.

The Head of Business Support advised Members that, as S151 Officer she is required to report on the adequacy of the Authority's reserve balances and whether spending plans are affordable. She reported that she considers this to be the case for this MTFP. Reserve balances are working balances and the Authority has an adequately funded contingency reserve to cover unforeseen circumstances.

In year 1 the Authority will use £73k from this year's revenue surplus, plus the request to draw £40k from reserves to fund extra support for visitor management initiatives during the summer. The indicative budget gaps in years 2 and 3 which currently assume no increase in NPG are considered to be manageable. Section 8 of the report details a risk analysis matrix reflecting the assumptions and uncertainties that have been considered whilst building the current MTFP.

A priority focused and robust budget for 2021/22 has been built, based on sensible assumptions. It is disappointing that the Authority, once again, faces so much uncertainty and last-minute information about NPG. A flat cash settlement would represent a real terms cut, due to the cost base continuing to rise at a faster rate than underlying core funding. Officers are very successful in leveraging external funding streams and pursuing initiatives like Moor Otters; however, one-off funding is not sustainable and cannot replace core grant which enables the Authority to deliver its core business.

The Head of Business Support advised Members that the budget before them is very much a one year budget which is robust and deliverable. It is very hard to plan for the future until a clearer view of longer-term prospects become clear, when the Government holds a proper CSR and issues national parks with longer term funding settlements.

A Member praised the Head of Business Support for the report. He added, however, that he was left very frustrated with the fact that she had been required to put the budget together having received no confirmation of National Park Grant from Defra. He asked who to contact in order to express dissatisfaction over the delay. Another Member felt that Defra had a Duty of Care to ensure that the Authority had confirmation of its NPG for the forthcoming year, given that 2021/22 commences in just a few weeks time.

A Member asked if any further work was proposed going forward in respect of the possibility of an annual card for car parking. In addition, he expressed concern over the prospect of double charging visitors i.e., their having to pay at each car park rather than having an all day ticket.

Two Members requested clarification with regard to the proposed £50k spend in regard to the upgrade of the Development Management systems.

A Member requested that it be noted in the Minutes that Defra had its budget confirmed in October 2020, i.e., six months ago. Therefore, NPG should have been confirmed by now.

The Head of Business Support advised Members that officers had looked into the possibility of parking permits on several occasions but, so far, it has not proved viable, financially or administratively. Card and telephone payments are being considered to alleviate the cash issue but signal and coverage are issues in this respect. Currently, visitors are required to pay at each car park they use. She advised that she would take Member comments back to the Head of Recreation, Access and Estates.

The Development Management service currently uses a system which is no longer fit for purpose. It is no longer further developed or fully supported. Officers are currently working on what is required and various software packages are being considered. £50k is the very least that the Authority will be expected to pay for this software.

The Chief Executive advised that Defra had a legal obligation to have regard for National Park Purposes. They are required to provide confirmation of NPG by the end of the financial year. A request was made to Defra to advise NPG early in order that officers could undertake rigorous budget planning. These representations were first made in November last year when Defra advised that they were working on budget submissions to ministers; this line has been maintained and the latest advice is that budgets have been submitted to ministers and are due to be considered this week. The message conveyed to the Authority on Monday 1 March was that they hope to be able to confirm grant in a matter of days. In response to the Member's question, he advised that Members should contact the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

A Member commented that the issue of all day tickets had been raised at previous meetings. He felt that this could ease some of the pressure points across the moor. The Director for Conservation and Communities, in response to this issue, advised Members that if this issue was to be considered, Members would need to be mindful of a timescale. Officer workloads have been set; the Authority has a very busy visitor season ahead to which staff are going to be extremely committed. If Members require officers to undertake more work on this, then they would need to accept that this could not be undertaken until the autumn. A survey was undertaken a year ago; the overall response at that time was that there was not much interest from the public. This was reported back to the Park Management Working Panel at the time.

Further Member comments on this issue are as follows:

- A notice could be placed on each car parking machine stating that an all day ticket could be purchased for any one day, allowing visitors to use any of the car parks;
- £3 per day – too cheap, consideration to be given to increase the price.

The Chief Executive advised that Member comments had been noted. He gave an undertaking that he would review the issues raised and feedback to Members. However, he felt that priority should be given to visitor management and not car park charges at this stage.

Mr Sanders proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Mr Gribble.

RESOLVED: Members:

- (i) Approved the 2021/22 budget and noted the indicative budgets for 2022/23 and 2023/24, as shown in appendices 1 – 3;
- (ii) Agreed that fees and charges should remain unchanged for 2021/22 as set out in section 5 of the report;
- (iii) Approved the capital strategy as set out in section 6 of the report; and
- (iv) Approved the allocation of reserve balances as set out in section 7 of the report and appendix 6.

3303 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2021/22

Members received the report of the Head of Business Support (NPA/21/010).

Each year, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management, the Authority must set out and adopt a Treasury Management & Investment Strategy, a copy of which can be found at appendix 1. This is a straightforward document as the Authority is debt free and has no plans to borrow, has modest working capital balances that are invested in bank treasury deposits, rarely has a capital programme of any substance and does not have any other type of investment activity that falls outside of the Treasury management policy, i.e. commercial investments in property, companies or other financial assets.

There are no changes to the CIPFA Code this year, so the Treasury Management Policy, the Strategy and Treasury Management practices remain unchanged. The overriding objective of the strategy (required by the Code) is to invest prudently, with priority being given to Security & Liquidity before Yield.

Mr Sanders proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Mr Ball.

RESOLVED: Members approved the 2021/22 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy.

Mr Barker left the meeting.

3304 National Park Partnerships Limited Liability Partnership

Members received the report of the Head of Communications and Fundraising (NPA/21/011).

In 2015 National Park Partnerships Limited (NPPL) was established with a management board mixture of representatives from National Parks and the private sector. The partnership was developed to create national level partnerships to generate income or in-kind benefit for the 15 UK National Parks. It soon became apparent that a self-funding option, that also produced significant cash income for all National Parks was not viable in the short term. Long lead times for establishing corporate partnerships and in-kind partnerships had not been accounted for in the original model.

In 2017 a subscription model was developed where each National Park would be asked to pay £10,000 per year to fund the operating costs of NPPL for the remainder of the three-year business plan. The Authority has paid for the past three years; last

year should have been the final year of the business plan. A review was due along with a proposal for future options and a revised business plan for the future.

To date, the Authority has invested £50,000 in NPPL - £20,000 to establish the partnership and then £10,000 per year as part of the annual subscription. The Authority has benefitted from a number of partnerships, both with regard to cash and in-kind support; details are set out in 3.3 of the report.

2020 has been significantly impacted by Covid-19; some of the final year targets and ambitions within the NPPL business plan could, unfortunately, not be realised. Given the current ongoing economic uncertainty, NPPL has proposed an interim business plan for one year in order to gain a deeper insight into future prospects and partners.

A positive which has emerged from the pandemic is the renewed interest in nature and the outdoors - this is not only true of individuals, but also of greater interest to commercial partners as part of their interest in investing more in corporate social responsibility. Dartmoor National Park is part of a pilot being developed through NPPL called Net Zero with Nature and is currently working with a partner who is providing pro bono support to develop this concept.

The proposed funding model for the 2021/22 year will be a reduction on the previous subscription to £8,500 per National Park. This is based on the assumption that all 15 National Parks pay; previously not all have contributed, but all have received the benefits.

The Authority has invested a significant amount in NPPL over the past five years and has seen a small return on this investment. The expected review of the NPPL business plan, due in spring 2021, has not been possible; a pragmatic approach would be to have an interim business plan for a year and then review and consider future options.

Central Government expects the Authority to diversify its income base and seek funding from other sources. DNPA has very little in the way of assets from which it can generate funding; the Partnership, alongside fundraising and grant applications are the best way for the Authority to achieve this.

The reduction in the subscription is welcome given the ongoing economic situation, coupled with the uncertainty around National Park Grant and a future spending review.

In response to Member queries, the Head of Communications and Fundraising confirmed that the reduced amount is conditional on all National Parks making the payment. If all 15 do not pay then the amount required could be more.

Mr Harper advised, in his capacity of Director, NPPL, that the company involved is called Palladium. They are a global company looking at mixed finance options for different companies, governments and organisations across the world. They have offered £500k worth of pro bono work in order to work up the 'Net Zero' proposition.

Mr Ball proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Mr Smerdon.

RESOLVED: Members:

- (i) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive (National Park Officer), in consultation with the Chair, to agree a further contribution to the operating costs of National Parks Partnerships Limited Liability Partnership for 2021/22 of £8,500; and
- (ii) Authorised the Chair to write to the NPPL Board to express Members' thanks for the work they are doing on behalf of all 15 UK National Park Authorities.

3305 Visitor Management

Members received the report of the Director of Conservation and Communities (NPA/21/012).

She advised that the story of last summer is very well rehearsed; the rise in people visiting the National Park and the countryside right across the UK; higher numbers of first time visitors and from a wide variety of backgrounds. At some sites there has been a significant increase in younger visitors. The increased use of the Park continued into the autumn and winter. This increased interest in the countryside should be welcomed and nurtured. If people enjoy something they will value and care for it. However, the pace of change and sheer numbers last year took everyone by surprise. The numbers of cars, people, selected locations and the behaviours experienced of a minority were all part of the challenge.

With a focus on plans for the 2021 season, the Director highlighted the collaborative partnership that the Authority has developed which enables more effective deployment of resources and improved communications. She thanked the partners for their assistance last summer, especially when visitor numbers were high and resources were stretched, particularly the Police.

Another lesson learned is the power of social media platforms and web based tools such as google maps/strava to influence people's decisions regarding where to go and what to do.

It is expected that visitor numbers this season will continue to be high. The plan for 2021 has four key elements:

- Communicating key messages
- Providing a warm welcome
- Managing traffic flows
- Limiting damage

This will effectively be the provision of a warm welcome, with the use of more restrictive measures if they are deemed necessary. The key message will be 'welcome back, leave no trace, give nature space'.

The Authority is planning to deploy Marshalls once again this summer. Some funding has been provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Forestry Commission. As previously outlined by the Head of Business Support it is also planned to use reserves to facilitate this work. Decisions are also awaited from partners, including Natural England, the Woodland Trust and the National Trust.

The issues surrounding Wistman's Wood have been outlined within the report. The Authority is working with the Duchy of Cornwall, Natural England and graziers to plan for a busy summer. Mr Kennard talked about a 'virtual fence'. People have suggested that an actual fence is constructed around the site, but this would only work if you have people on the ground to engage with visitors and encourage responsible behaviour. A crucial element of our approach is engagement – via a mixture of staff, volunteers, Marshalls and special constables if needed. A call out to volunteers has been placed this week, offering the opportunity to be engagement volunteers over the summer. It is hoped that there will be enough to fill weekends between April and October and have six voluntary wardens working alongside staff. This work would include having an element at Wistman's Wood. In addition, the Authority is ready to enforce temporary restrictions if required, as was done last summer at Bellever. The Authority must be able to act quickly but would only take these measures where necessary, ensuring that visitors understand our reasoning and need for action.

Communities and businesses need visitors. The plan is not aiming to dissuade them, rather provide them with the information and tools they need to make the best use of the National Park whilst taking responsibility for their actions.

The Director took the opportunity to thank Visitor Centre staff, Outreach staff, the Recreation and Access team, Conservation Works team, the Admin and Reception team, and particularly the Ranger team. It has been a very difficult year balancing pressures and demands.

With regard to the concerns raised by Mr Kennard, these were addressed. With regard to the 'virtual fence' being incomplete, the Authority will only be able to have support on the ground during weekends and bank holidays. There would, therefore, be a gap in the week. However, new visitor counters are to be placed on the site which will provide much more detailed information about peak times etc so that resources can be utilized more effectively. Reserves have been used to try to support work over the summer but we do not have enough resources to provide a 7 day a week cover. Requests for support from Natural England, the Woodland Trust and the National Trust have been made and responses are awaited. It is hoped that there will be enough voluntary wardens to help staff with their work. They would work in teams of two, would not implement bylaws, rather encourage visitors to understand the need for consideration and respect for the landscape.

Expectations must be realistic. It is not possible to guarantee that the plans that the Authority puts in place this summer will solve all the problems. It is expected that officers will work more effectively with partners, responding to new issues and opportunities where possible. Visitors will be welcomed and encouraged to plan ahead.

There is currently very little funding to support visitor management at this time, yet damage to the fabric of the moor can be seen in many places, due to high levels of use. In the longer term, officers are seeking support for visitor management and to undertake conservation work and will continue to do so.

A Member asked that thanks to the Director of Conservation and Communities, together with the wider team and specifically Rangers be recorded in the Minutes in respect of the work undertaken last year.

In response to Member queries, the Director responded as follows:

- It is intended to make more use of the Outreach vehicle as well as the trailer, which has not been used for a while. Locations for the trailer are currently being considered where it could be sited for 2-3 weeks at a time.
- Management of traffic flow – all of the National Parks have had to cope with this issue. There is no easy solution; we have to do what we can to try to influence people's decisions, before they come, on their journey and when they get here. Work regarding bulletins on the radio and social media will assist with this. Some of work will be the provision of 'real time' information – it is hoped that the message will be 'put out there' very early on if, for example, a particular area of the moor is extremely busy. This may aid a visitor's decision regarding where to go on Dartmoor. It is hoped that there will be some 'real time' signage on the main arteries onto the moor, at Roborough Down and Bovey Tracey.
- Good signage on the moor is essential. This will include the bright yellow signs and more informative signage.

A Member commented that it is very important that we encourage people to visit Dartmoor. He acknowledged that the Authority does not currently have the funding available to complete the 'virtual fence' around Wistman's Wood, adding that, in his view, the weekend starts on Friday afternoon. The Authority finds itself in a difficult situation in that the Bylaws are currently out of date, having been written in 1989. Work has commenced on this but, due to consultation and other procedures required, it is likely to be the end of the summer when these will be up to date. The ongoing positive relationship with police, marshalls etc is essential. With regard to presence of social media, the Authority's presence could aim to temper visitor behaviour. This does not mean that the National Park should be prohibitive. The issues regarding the rare lichen at Wistman's Wood are very real.

Another Member suggested that the Authority could potentially work with the Two Bridges Hotel, possibly building a positive experience for visitors.

In response to further Member queries, the Director of Conservation and Communities advised as follows:

- The Bylaws review has commenced, there will be a consultation period, but it will likely be the end of the summer before new Bylaws are in place. Officers are working with the Police in trying to obtain dedicated special constables who will work with staff during the summer.
- Social media is key. The partnership group identified a social media campaign as top priority for this season. The Head of Communications and Fundraising is working with partners to get the campaign up and running.
- Coverage at the weekends – work is continuing with regard to the tendering process for Marshalls. Friday and Saturday evenings would be the focus of their work.
- Conversations are ongoing with the Two Bridges Hotel with regard to their available car parking and messaging.
- Work has been undertaken with the 'Park for Night' App in respect of camper vans. A member of her team has requested that all of the sites previously showing as an overnight site be changed to a day site. It has not been

possible to influence everything on that site but work continues. With regard to the allocation of motor home sites, this is harder than anticipated. The relaxation of planning does not include caravans and motor homes, only camp sites. Another member of staff will be looking at Google Maps, in an attempt to ensure that the information is relevant i.e., car parking spaced.

- With regard to the lichens at Wistman's Wood, the Authority's Ecologist has visited the site along with a representative of Natural England. The impact is very localised and unlikely to be affecting the extremely rare lichens. Photographic monitoring has been set up and will be reviewed throughout the season.

RESOLVED Members NOTED the content of the report.

3306 Tree Preservation Orders and Section 211 Notification s (Works to Trees in Conservation Areas) Determined Under Delegated Powers

Members received the report of the Trees and Landscape Officer (NPA/21/013)

RESOLVED: Members NOTED the content of the report.

DRAFT