

Dartmoor National Park Authority

Public Minutes of Meeting held on 9 May 2025

Present:

Will Dracup, Gay Hill, James McInnes, Sally Morgan, Caroline Mott, John Nutley, Mark Owen, Guy Pannell, Mark Renders, Philip Sanders, Peter Smerdon, Dan Thomas, Mark Williams, Pamela Woods

Apologies:

Kevin Bishop (Chief Executive (National Park Officer)), Peter Harper, Mike Jeffery, Lois Samuel, Mary Seddon

Non-Attendance:

Jerry Brook

Officers in attendance:

Richard Drysdale (Director of Conservation and Communities), Dean Kinsella (Director of Spatial Planning), Jen Manning (Partnership Plan and Climate Officer), Cath Burnett (Business Support – Minutes)

The Chair welcomed Catherine Shewan (Independent Person), Hanna Virta (Legal Representative), the Press and those listening remotely.

3668 Declarations of Interest

None.

3669 Minutes

The public minutes of the meetings held on 4 April 2025, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3670 Chair's Report

The Chair reported having attended the following meetings:

- National Parks England: a two-day meeting hosted within the South Downs National Park. The meeting focused on funding and resourcing for the future. The group discussed creating a 'future vision' document, to support future funding bids. A small working party was set up, with Pamela Woods and 2 others, to agree wording/content.
- Dartmoor Rural Crime Initiative: a multi-agency, multi-stakeholder initiative, a forum for agencies to come together for the benefit of Dartmoor. The issues discussed include animal welfare, casualties and fatalities. The Police thanked and praised this group, a model for other areas.
- The Chair reported the recent wildfire on Dartmoor, recording formal thanks to all those involved in putting the fire out – the Fire Service, the Commoners and the Rangers. Richard Drysdale (Director of Conservation and Communities) advised that the wildfire had been misreported in the press in terms of size, the scale is in the region of 1250 acres (or 5 sq. kilometres/500 hectares). This is still significant, the location (south of Cut Hill) is very remote, the furthest point from any road on the moor – therefore making the work of all those involved more challenging. All parties worked well together. The fire started Sunday 4 May in the afternoon and was out by Monday 5 May lunchtime.

The FSI (Fire Severity Index) rating is currently high/exceptional, and the moor is very dry. All parties have had a de-brief and raised a number of key points to be taken away. The issues will be highlighted in media posts and signs will be placed across the moor. With Ten Tors happening next weekend and 2,500 young people out camping and cooking, it has been agreed that all will be under supervised cooking regime. There will be a Fire Service investigation, the cause is currently unknown. Members recorded formal thanks to the Fire Service, the Commoners for their support and local knowledge and the Rangers.

- The Chair sent good luck to all participants taking part in the Ten Tors challenge.

The Deputy Chair reported:

- On the visit from MP Mary Creagh on 9 April 2025 and passed his thanks to Kevin Bishop (Chief Executive (National Park Officer)) and Richard Drysdale (Director of Conservation and Communities) for a cram-packed visit and agenda. It was a good opportunity to raise issues and ask questions. Richard Drysdale (Director of Conservation and Communities) advised that no formal response has been received from the office of MP Mary Creagh, however, the Authority has received questions from DEFRA following the visit.
- Attending UK National Parks meeting, and that National Park Partnership funding opportunities will be upcoming.
- His thanks to all in tackling the wildfire, emphasizing the power of partnership working.

3671 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

None.

3672 Public Participation

None.

3673 Dartmoor Partnership Plan 2021-2026 – Review Process

Considered: Report of the Partnership Plan and Climate Officer and the Director of Spatial Planning (NPA/25/019).

The Partnership Plan and Climate Officer presented the report.

In response to Member questions, the Partnership Plan and Climate Officer advised:

- That the Management Plan and Partnership Plan (PP) are the same document
- The public opinion survey is likely to be collated via a questionnaire, initially online and then will be reviewed as to how we reach wider audience
- Questions about the byelaw review will not be included in the PP survey
- The Partnership Board (PB) are in agreement that the PP is meaningful, and adds value to how all members/organisations work together for the benefit of Dartmoor
- PB attendance at meetings will be reported to Members
- There are 2 gaps in membership 1) next generation and 2) business and communities
- There will be opportunities to engage with Parish Councils as the PP develops
- The PB are working through how best to engage with all parties
- A PB folder has been created within SharePoint where PB (and their substitute members) can access papers, and they will also be sent out via email

Members noted that they were in full support of the PP and were pleased to see a step forward. It was suggested that the Park Management Working Panel could be a good avenue for Member engagement with the plan.

- Resolved:** Members:
- (i) supported the establishment of the Partnership Board;
 - (ii) noted the need to review the Dartmoor Partnership Plan 2021-2026;
 - (iii) noted the proposed review process and indicative timeline for the Partnership Plan review; and
 - (iv) advised their views on Member engagement with the review process.

3674 Donate for Dartmoor

Considered: Report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) (NPA/25/020)

The Director of Conservation and Communities presented the report.

In response to Member questions, the Director of Conservation and Communities advised:

- The breakdown of how donations are currently received will be sent to Members (i.e. Visitor Centre, online etc);
- It is proposed that donations received from Ten Tors continue to come directly to DNPA as this money goes directly towards access projects;
- The reasoning behind the proposal is lack of capacity within the Authority to increase donations, for example charitable status is needed to take contactless payments at Visitor Centres;
- Dartmoor Futures (DF) are awaiting confirmation of charitable status from the Charity Commission. Once charitable status is confirmed, DF are planning a formal launch of the charity and its purpose;
- Theresa Preston (Chief Executive, Dartmoor Futures) will be asked to write to Members with a summary of progress to date.;
- Members noted that all DF decisions are in collaboration with DNPA, who sit on their Board.

Mr Thomas proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Mr Owen.

Members were cautious about approving the proposal, many feeling that the timing was not quite right. Members agreed it would be better to wait until DF has its charitable status, has formally launched and there was further development. Members would like to have more communication with the DF.

Mr Thomas subsequently withdrew the proposal, which was seconded by Mr Owen.

Resolved: Members agreed that the report be withdrawn.

Thank you to Members leaving the Authority

Ms Woods (Chair of the Authority) advised that this will be the final meeting for Mr McInnes, Mr Sanders and Ms Samuel.

On behalf of Members, she sent a heartfelt thanks to Mr McInnes and Mr Sanders for their skills, experience, advice and support over many years. They have shown great leadership

and have both effectively chaired many Development Management meetings, providing statesman like advice. They will be missed, and Members send their warmest wishes.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12.30.

DRAFT