

Dartmoor National Park Authority

Development Management Committee

Public Minutes of Friday 7 November 2025

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

Apologies: Mike Jeffery and Richard Keeling

Officers in attendance: Dean Kinsella (Director of Spatial Planning), James Aven (Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement)), Paul Bryan (Trees and Landscapes Officer), Cath Burnett (Business Support - Minutes), Anna Wych (Senior Planning Administrator)

The Chair welcomed Corrinne Farrell (Independent Persons), Hanna Virta (Legal Representative) and Guy Henderson (Press). She welcomed Julia Galbenu and advised that this is Julia's first Development Management meeting in an official capacity as formal training was completed on 31 October 2025. She also welcomed the 3 speakers and those who were listening in person and online.

1634 Declarations of Interest and Contact

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

The following Members declared an interest in **item 6 (ENF/0105/22)**:

Mr Fife Cook declared a personal interest as the area is in his electoral division.

Mrs Morgan declared a personal interest, having received emails from residents, of which she did not reply. Mrs Morgan also noted that she should have a C in the matrix as county member.

Mr Renders declared a personal interest having had a brief meeting with the ward member yesterday, advising them to come along to the meeting today.

Mr Dracup declared a personal interest, having received a number of emails which he has responded with an acknowledgement only.

The following Members declared an interest in **item 7 (TPO 228 of 2025)**:

Mr Major declared a personal interest due to being a district representative and also a local resident.

Mr Nutley declared a personal interest as he knows the speaker and met with her son a number of months ago.

Mr Rogers declared a professional interest as a county member and will leave the room for this item.

Dr Seddon declared a personal interest in **item 8 (TPO's and Section 211 Notifications)** due to her husband's interest in Meldon Viaduct Board. Mrs

Mott also declared an interest in this item as she sits on the Meldon Viaduct Board.

Mr Pannell declared a professional interest in **item 10 (Part II)** due to the location being in his district ward.

1635 Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2025

The public minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2025, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The Director of Spatial Planning gave a brief update on Teign Valley Golf Club (NPA/DM/25/013), advising that no further correspondence had been received within the consultation period. He confirmed that DNPA are in the process of negotiating and securing the Section 106 with regards to Bio Diversity Net Gain.

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/25/016).

0291/25 - Oxford House, 10 West Street, Ashburton, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ13 7DU

The Case Officer presented the application which sought permission for a change of use of ground floor from retail to full residential use.

Committee Report amendment:

Paragraph 8.6 - the last sentence should read as follows:

Officers are satisfied that the requirements identified within the Glossary of the Local Plan with regard to appropriate marketing evidence have been supplied and therefore comply with the necessary criteria with policy SP5.3 of the local plan.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions of Officers and sought clarification on why the application was being presented to Members.

The Case Officer responded to Member questions as follows:

- The reason that this application has come to committee is due to transparency as the applicant is related to a member of DNPA staff.
- The application is recommended for approval, regardless of the applicants' relationship to a member of staff.

Mr Thomas proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Mrs Mott.

There was no debate.

Resolved: That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the conditions as stated within the report.

1638 Monitoring and Enforcement

Considered: The Report of the Director of Spatial Planning
(NPA/DM/25/017)

ENF/0105/22 Devon Oaks Holiday Park, formerly Magpie Leisure Park,
Bedford Bridge, Tavistock, Devon, PL20 7RY

Speakers: Chris Griffiths (Objector), David Warren (Objector) and Ruth Nicholls (Objector)

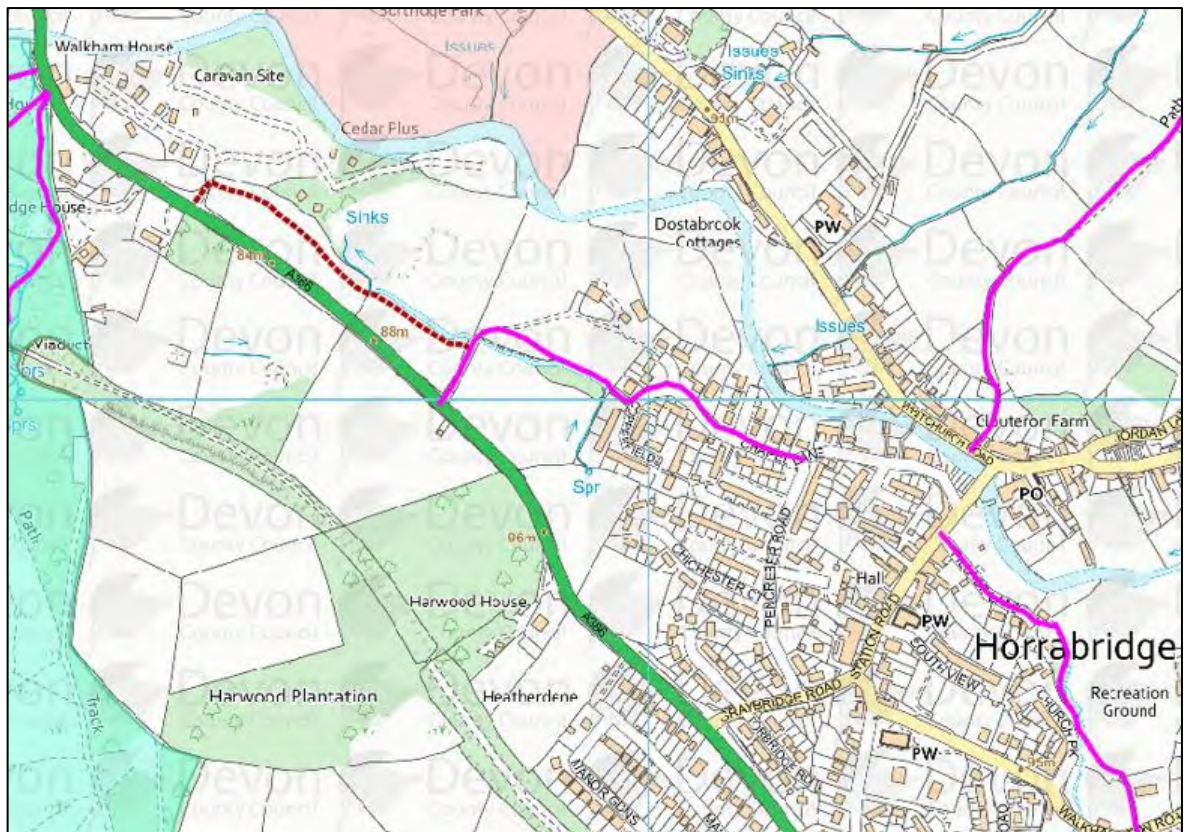
The Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement) presented the report. He advised that Members attended a Site Inspection on 17 October 2025.

The Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement) clarified that in item 2.3.1, 'vans' refer to caravans. He summarised the 1987 permission and 1993 permission permit:

- 9 residential caravans
- 16 chalets for holiday use
- 18 static caravans for holiday use
- 30 touring caravans for holiday use

Since the report, further details have been confirmed (as below) which were shared with Members prior to the meeting:

- Certificate of Lawfulness applications ref. 0303/22 and 0230/23 that appear in the Planning History in this report have now been determined, with both being refused.
- At their site visit on 17 October, Members queried the possible effects of the excavations that have taken place at this site on the stability of the adjacent highway. Devon County Council (DCC) has been consulted on this matter and advise that further measurements are required to determine whether the works pose a risk to the highway and its users.
- Members and Parish Councillors have enquired about the status of the now closed footpath that ran through the two fields to the SE of the site entrance, linking the caravan park to the PROW network to Horrabridge. This is shown as a red dotted line on the plan below. An application under Schedule 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 has been submitted to DCC seeking to add this route to the Definitive Map (DM) and Statement of Public Rights of Way. Responsibility for the DM rests with DCC so it will be for them to determine the application. As it stands at present, this footpath is an unrecorded route but may have rights established through long public use.



Speaker 1 Mr Griffiths (Objector):

Ahead of this meeting, Mr Griffiths shared two documents — Briefing Note to Members and The Devon Oaks Project. He said that he hoped that Members had had the chance to read and reflect on these, as they are integral to understanding both the situation they face at Devon Oaks and the constructive solutions they are proposing.

He went on to say that the homeowners at Devon Oaks are mostly retirees and people working in essential local roles, who invested in their homes in good faith, expecting security and stability. He said that the contracts clearly stated 11 months' occupancy — openly advertised, never hidden — and with the Authority inspecting the site regularly, they had every reason to believe this was correct. He stated that these are their homes, their savings, and their futures.

He said that today Members have the discretion to enforce an 8-month restriction or to allow the existing 11-month pattern of life to continue — and emphasised that the difference is stark.

He believes that eight months would cause real harm: uprooting elderly and vulnerable residents and destabilising a settled community. He feels that it would also be unworkable — moving out for a third of the year is not feasible, and with the severe housing shortage in the South West, temporary accommodation would be extremely difficult to secure. He said it would also push the site back towards a high-turnover holiday park model, bringing heavier seasonal impacts, less environmental care, and a transient presence offering little benefit to the area.

In his opinion, by contrast, 11 months causes no harm and delivers clear benefits. He went on to say that a responsible year-round presence protects the land, while an empty winter period provides no environmental gain. He said that local residents

support shops, schools, churches, and services and that they pay 12 months of council tax. He feels that there is precedent as nine homes already have 12-month permissions, and in 2013 an 11-month model was approved in principle.

He knows that responsibility for this situation lies with Barton Park Estates, who knowingly sold 11-month licences on land restricted to 8 months. Whilst residents were misled, he feels that enforcement should not punish innocent homeowners.

He spoke of a positive path forward: the Devon Oaks Project, a resident-led initiative to restore habitats, plant hedgerows, enhance river frontage, open a footpath linking Horrabridge with the Drakes Trail, and create an education hub for schools, colleges, and the wider community (a community-led conservation, fully aligned with the National Park's aims).

He believes that Members should support an 11-month residency and the Devon Oaks Project as fair, proportionate, and forward-looking. He said that this is about more than policy — it is about people, fairness, and the future of the National Park. He asked Members to recognise the harm an 8-month limit would cause, and the good that will come from supporting 11 months and the Devon Oaks Project.

Members thanked Mr Griffiths for his speech, his briefing note and project plan.

In response to Member questions, Mr Griffiths advised that the residents set up the association themselves as a proactive way forward with Mr Griffiths taking on the role of Chair. He advised that the residents have written to the landowner four times but have received no response.

Speaker 2 Mr Warren (Objector):

In brief, Mr Warren asked Members to consider the human side and to understand that the situation is making many people very anxious with the prospect of financial difficulty and homelessness. He went on to say that this is a peaceful environment, and that residents have nowhere else to go. He said that it will make homes unsaleable. He asked Members to consider letting residents stay for 11 months as per the 2013 application with conditions. Mr Warren is a resident and lives in one of the chalets.

Speaker 3 Ms Nicholls (Objector) (unable to attend in person, her speech was read aloud by the Director of Spatial Planning:

"We are resident in Worcester but own a single unit static caravan at Devon Oaks Park. Due to working commitments, we are unable to attend Friday's meeting. Please share the following observations with your fellow Committee Members.

With regard to taking enforcement action at Devon Oaks Park, I respectfully suggest that there is insufficient information available to Members to enable them to make an informed decision on Friday. Despite a lengthy and in some parts detailed report, there are some glaring omissions that make it disproportionate. In particular, there is very little information about the occupiers of the Park.

The report also contains some inaccuracies, for example the map attached to the report is incorrect. It doesn't even reflect the site as at the date of the Members site visit.

The recommendation, although it doesn't use these words, is that you should approve enforcement action 'in principle'. You do not have details of what actions

exactly will be required, who will be affected, nor the implications/consequences of such actions. That level of detail, we are told, will be determined by Officers and will not be referred back to you. And yet the report indicates that the implications for occupiers is that they may be evicted, some may lose their homes, and thousands of pounds. If this was a single residence, surely Members would expect to receive such details, with such severe implications, why not for the occupiers of Devon Oaks Park?

The report tells us that 33 PCNs were issued in March 2025. Since then, 33 families' lives have been on tender hooks for eight months. The only feedback from Officers to occupiers during this time has been "nothing has been decided yet". However, last Friday, those of us who have read the published report learned that it is recommended that 14 of us are to be evicted!

The report gives a detailed planning history and concludes, in so many words, that since the site owner is not open to negotiations enforcement action is unavoidable. It implies that the same applies to occupiers, but that is simply not true. Occupiers have not been given the opportunity to negotiate a regularisation of the situation. Requests for meetings with Officers have not materialised, just the message "nothing has been decided yet."

Indeed, we have been so concerned that we personally instructed a Planning Consultant to advise us on regularising our situation. He has been in touch with Officers to inform them of this fact. The feedback we received was that any planning application was unlikely to succeed as it would be "contrary to policy and in a flood risk zone."

Friday's report was the first time any of the policies have been articulated.

So, we ask, 'where is the Authority's detailed report on flood risk'? We have interrogated the Environment Agency information online and it reveals that the extent of the flood risk for parts of the site is 8". We have shared this with Officers. Eight inches. Members will have seen at the site visit that the static caravans are three feet above ground with brick skirts.

The report concludes that compliance with Dartmoor's policies outweighs any Human Rights or Equality obligations, but how can Members be sure that is the case? The report has just two short paragraphs which refer generically to occupiers having issues with physical, ill health, mental health, relationship and financial problems which have been or might be exacerbated by enforcement action.

Members are not provided with any detailed information of scales, nor protected characteristics. There are no details of the impact/consequences of enforcement action against individuals (as you would with a single property enforcement action), nor have you any details of the legality of any action that might be required by officers. For example, the majority of occupiers have 35 years leases with the site owner affording them exclusive possession and protection against eviction. Can Dartmoor really require the site owner to take action which might be unlawful?

Finally, returning the site to "it's original condition" – what is that? Pre-1987 or pe-2018? How much of the infrastructure – concrete, tarmac, buildings – are to be removed? What will be the impact on the local environment of such wholesale action – on biodiversity, the release of CO2 and the disturbance to wildlife. Where is the report, for Members from Officers, detailing the impact on the local environment of such wholesale demolition?

The site is currently visited by pheasants and deer. Will they be forced to relocate elsewhere in the face of such huge levels of destruction? Why repeat the upheaval of the original construction when the site is now settling down?

I respectfully suggest that further research by Officers and negotiations between officers, occupiers and the site owner are undertaken before Members make a decision regarding enforcement action at Devon Oaks Park.”

In response to Member questions, the Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement) and the Director of Spatial Planning advised:

- This is an extremely difficult case. The Enforcement Team have dealt with the situation as sensitively as possible, with sympathy for those residents who are affected.
- The report is very clear, the process has been followed methodically, and Officers have sought to seek compliance over 18 months.
- That the landowner was invited to the Site Inspection but did not attend.
- That personal surveys and welfare checks have been carried out with an 80% response rate from residents.
- It is important for Members to focus on the planning considerations. Members are here to consider whether it is appropriate for this Authority to take enforcement action.
- Members to revisit the Recommendation and to refer to item 5.9 – Effect of legal action.
- The breach of planning conditions have happened since 2018 (with change of ownership) and have been in the public domain since then. The landowners are part of the enquiry and are fully aware of the restrictions and requirements. The breaches are outlined in item 2.5.
- No planning permissions have been sought since 2018.
- The original 9 residential units are sited and can be occupied permanently as per the 1987 permissions.
- The other (static) caravans can be sited permanently but only occupied for 8 months of the year.
- When the original chalets were removed, the planning permission related to them was exhausted – these chalets cannot be replaced without new planning permission.
- In 2013 permission was granted to extend conditions for occupancy from 8 months to 11 months. These conditions were not complied with and planning permission lapsed. The same permissions cannot now be allowed due to policy conditions changing, and in addition some of the site is located in flood risk zones 2 and 3.
- The conditions stipulated that the caravans were to be used for bone-fide holiday use.
- DNPA is in touch with West Devon Borough Council licensing team who are fully aware of the situation. If Members approve the recommendation today, the Housing Department will be contacted moving forward.

With regards to questions about the landowner and liability, the DNPA Legal Advisor responded that it's important to weigh up public interest in carrying out planning control and the individual interests of those residents. There may be

alternative remedy and commercial interest, but this is not a decision for today.

Mrs Mott proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Mr Pannell.

There was some debate, Members addressed the residents who were present and with a heavy heart voted unanimously in favour of the recommendation. Members noted that they were disappointed that the landowner was not in attendance. Members acknowledged that this is a very difficult situation. They felt that they had no choice but to support the planning process and the recommendation, with the worry being that the situation will get worse if nothing is done.

Resolved: That, the appropriate legal action be AUTHORISED to secure a cessation of the unauthorised change of use of the land, including the removal of the unauthorised caravans, chalet, utilities buildings and engineering operations, and the restoration of the land to its previous condition.

1639 Tree Preservation Orders and Section 211 Notifications (Works to Trees in Conservation Areas) Determined Under Delegated Powers

Considered: The Report of the Trees and Landscapes Officer (NPA/DM/25/018).

Tree Preservation Order No. 228 of 2025 – Land at Kenwyn, Ashburton, Newton Abbot, TQ13 7ED, to be confirmed without modification

Mr Rogers left the room for this item.

The Trees and Landscapes Officer presented his report.

Speaker: Annie Hill Smith (Supporter)

Ms Hill Smith thanked and fully supports the report of the Trees and Landscapes Officer. She understands that the property was sold to Devonshire Homes subject to planning permission by Devon County Council in January 2025. She spoke of delays in submission of planning permission application by Devonshire Homes. In July 2025 Devon Homes were given 10 weeks to submit planning permission, nothing has happened. Ms Hill Smith has written to central government to find out what is happening. Until Devonshire Homes show their hand, all trees are considered at risk – refer to items 3 and 4 in report which accurately describe the trees. This is a biodiverse site with steep slopes and views of from all around. Ms Hill Smith is an Ashburton resident who has told Devon County Council that she wants to buy and restore the house/grounds as a family home. She has written to Devon County Council and if successful in her purchase, the trees will be protected in perpetuity. She thanked all, especially the trees officer.

Members had no questions and were fully in support of the recommendation

Mrs Mott proposed the recommended which was seconded by Mr Major.

Resolved: Members APPROVED the recommendation that the Tree Preservation Order at Kenwyn, Ashburton, Newton Abbot, TQ13 7ED, be confirmed without modification.

Mr Rogers returned to the room.

1640 Tree Preservation Orders and Section 211 Notifications (Works to Trees in Conservation Areas) Determined Under Delegated Powers

Considered: The Report of the Director of Spatial Planning (NPA/DM/25/018).

Resolved: Members NOTED the content of the report.

1641 Appointment of Site Inspection Panel and Arrangements for Site Visits

The Director of Spatial Planning confirmed that there would be a site inspection on Friday 21 November 2025 to Hessary View, Princetown and possibly a second visit to Chagford. Members will be emailed separately to confirm attendance.

Public Summary of Items considered “in private” at the meeting of the Dartmoor National Park Authority on 7 November 2025

1642 Land east of Burchetts Lodge, Buckfastleigh, TQ11 0HW ENF/0003/23

Report of the Director of Spatial Planning (NPA/DM/25/020)

Resolved: Members noted the content of the report and agreed the recommendations stated within the report.

There being no other business, the Part II meeting ended and moved back to Part I.

There being no other business, the Part I meeting ended at 1240 hours