

Pony Action Group Meeting

Friday 22 June 2018

10:30 above Princetown Information Centre

Present

Ann Came (AC)	Dartmoor Hill Pony Association (DHPA)
Kerry Smith (KS)	Natural England (NE)
Sue Martin (SM)	Dartmoor Pony Society (DPS)
Helen Radmore (HR)	Independent
Sue Hutchings (SH)	Independent
Judy Fawcett (JF)	Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust (DPHT)
Claire Stanton (CS)	Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust (DPHT)
Mary Alford (MA)	Dartmoor Commoners Council (DaCC)
John Shears (JS)	Dartmoor Hill Pony Association (DHPA)
Rob Steemson (RS)	Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA)

Minutes taken by RS

1 Apologies

Elizabeth Newbould Young (ENY), John Waldon (JW), Tom Stratton (TS), Dru Butterfield (DB), Viv Brown (VB), Karla McKechnie (KM), Marion Saunders (MS),

2 Presentation by Friends of Dartmoor Hill Pony (FoDHP)

The FoDHP have requested to undertake the darting of mares involved with the contraceptive scheme of DNPA owned land. DNPA were keen that the PAG gave their opinion on the general concept to guide their potential decision. So the main focus of the meeting was to learn more about the contraception scheme and how the darting procedure takes place particularly as DNPA were one of many common landowners being asked for permission.

The presentation was undertaken by Joss Hibbs & Charlotte Faulkner from FoDHP along with Mike & Ryan from Animal Capture UK. Between them they provided an excellent overview of the scheme and a thorough explanation of the process for safe darting of animals.

PAG members present had many questions and satisfactory answers were given.

Once the invitees had left PAG members discussed the proposal. MA and JW requested that as standard protocol the Police, DNPA, local Commons Association and Commoners Council are always to be informed well before a darting expedition; and that no interference or change to the usual drift process should happen as a result of the scheme.

JF, SH and SM were concerned about the personal impact on Charlotte to take this responsibility in the long term, without any back up available to support her or to ensure the scheme was sustainable should she be unable to continue her huge commitment to it. There is genuine concern for her as an individual and for the reliance of the scheme on just one person.

The two points main points discussed would be given as positive feedback and all attendees were unanimous in their general ongoing support for the scheme. With all the safety procedures explained and in place PAG members also supported the fundamental concept of undertaking darting on the commons of Dartmoor and requested that DNPA gave permission on their land at Plasterdown, Haytor and Holne moor. Action RS to inform DNPA of PAG support

3 Minutes of last meeting & matters arising

The priority today was to host the above presentation. Minutes were agreed and matters arising will be held over to the next meeting.

4 Equine ID & Semi Feral Equines on Dartmoor

As a follow up from what JW had reported in the DaCC report last time it still appears that Defra has decided that the derogation can stay for the 15 months until Brexit. Meanwhile, there will be a further consultation to ask what UK needs after we leave EU.

5 Cohesive working between PAG partners

JS reported that two people from the DPS, DPHT & DPHA had recently met with an independent person to help them all enable a more cohesive approach for the benefit of all ponies. This was a positive outcome from the last PAG meeting when we discussed the Future of PAG.

It was stated then that NE is keen for PAG to continue having meetings and reporting back information in respect of delivering against the Partnership Action Plan. It is important that individual pony organisations work cohesively within PAG as this will potentially help to positively shape up wider DEFRA policies post Brexit. All three groups plan to continue this arrangement before future PAG meetings. There was also talk about potentially forming a Pony Keepers Association.

6 Date and venue of next meeting

10.30 on 21 September at Princetown