

# Dartmoor Farming in Protected Landscapes

## Local Assessment Panel

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2025- Parke

Attending: Russell Ashford, Peter Harper, Katie Wynter, Sarah Blyth, Alison Clish-Green, John Howell, Christine Malseed, Richard Drysdale, Dan Alford, Ann Willcocks (*attending as Layland Branfield substitute*).

Dartmoor staff attending: Bea Dunscombe, Kaitlin Perryman

Apologies: Will Dracup, Layland Branfield, Shirley Mudge.

## Looking to the year ahead

- Discussion about how team and Panel will manage the Capital/Revenue split appropriately going forward (80% Cap, 20% Rev)
- Panel requested FiPL team find out how much funding has been spent on fencing so far. To show % of budget that could have been spent more appropriately. Panel then requested more of a breakdown of this – including categories and % of allocation on those elements.
- Confirmation of team structure and compliments to KP and BD for driving the programme forward.

## Panel re-vote

- Question raised about whether we could invite other environmental/nature representatives – for example Butterfly Conservation & DWT? Confirmed that it has been agreed that there is only one NGO representative for each FiPL team in the Southwest due to lack of capacity.
- Panel discussed nominating Shirley Mudge as a separate farmer representative, not a sub-representative. Confirmed that Dan wouldn't need a new substitute. All in favour.
- Chairman vote – Russell confirmed he is happy to stand down if someone else nominates themselves. Panel confirmed that he's been an excellent chair and doesn't need to be replaced. All in favour. John proposed, Sarah seconded.
- Will confirmed remaining Vice-chair. All in favour.

## Strategic Planning

- Discussion about how FiPL funding could work alongside the Landscape Recovery programmes more efficiently?

- Panel requested an analysis and focus showing how applicants hear about FiPL? E.g. word of mouth. How are we getting the message across?
- Should the Panel be promoting the programme more? It was confirmed that they should be. We have a big budget and are open to ideas. Panel should be proactive in promoting FiPL.
- Discussed that a new approach this year could be to support fewer projects, but encourage collaboration across multiple landholdings. This would warrant a larger value, hitting multiple outcomes, and where possible, encourage more match-funding to increase benefit. This would require less of the FiPL Advisor's time in ensuring delivery of the programme, which would be better with the more limited resources for the year.
- Can FiPL Fortnight be shared more widely? FiPL team to check GDPR rules on this and then formalise it. For example, having a opt in tick box on the EOI form. Panel keen to be able to share and shout about successful applications with wider public.
- Panel requested the Team's map, pie chart and presentation to be shared with LAP members.
- Request to see a list of the smaller projects at the beginning of each LAP meeting (under £10ks), along with the remaining budget allocation. This is so they are more aware of remaining funds as well as know and celebrate smaller but equally impactful FiPL projects.
- Team to bring 'projects we want to shout about' to the Panel so they can confirm if they would also want them to be shouted about; via email.
- Panel asked about year 4 spend, did we over or underspend. Did we end up funding projects that were 'Approved by on the Reserve List' from the August 2024 panel meeting? FiPL team fed this back.
- The Panel asked about headline figures about the programmes level of interest so far and how many enquiries/applications we had received to date. So that they can gauge interest and success rate.
- Are cattle grids available on CS? Discussion over New Forest FiPL funding them previously, team to check in with the New Forest FiPL team.
- Natural England rep confirmed that previously 'Higher Tier' capital grants are now available to those outside of HT agreements, just as standalone Capital grants.
- Discussion over the use of limited FiPL funds on cactus guards and tree planting; concerns over their expensive cost. Health and safety concerns over cactus guards 'all over the common' for animals as well as public. Confirmed that cactus guards now available through CS.
- Can conditions be written in to FiPL agreements in relation to the maintenance of trees? Especially the removal of tree guards once the tree is established.
- Would it be appropriate for FiPL to prioritise access focused projects in the coming year? Team to confirm once access project budget for Dartmoor has been confirmed for DNPA.
- What about the use of FiPL to fund Historic Building restoration projects? FiPL team confirmed that whilst there is no additional pot of funding for them to delivered through FiPL, as long as they hit multiple outcomes where the costs were high, then the team could look to supporting some in the coming year. Panel would be happy to support as long as they are over and above the capital grant rate and specification.
- FiPL team to reach out to other FiPL teams for exciting project ideas

## **Pipeline projects;**

- Team listed several applications which are currently being drafted to give the panel an idea of upcoming projects, both under and over the £10,000 threshold.
- Panel asked for reassurance on the capacity within the team to help all the applicants complete the forms. Is it right for the advisors to be filling in the forms for the applicants or is their role to develop the project ideas?
- RD confirmed, along with the panel that they would be happy to use some of the overall budget to employ extra support and advice to ensure efficient programme delivery and appropriate resource for the level of interest.

## **Applications**

### **TB Support Group**

*(Presented by Bea Dunscombe)*

#### **Summary of application:**

To deliver 4x farmer-led, interactive, knowledge share workshops on Dartmoor, focusing on:

- The impact that bovine tuberculosis (bTB) has on Dartmoor's farmers, their families, and their farm businesses.
- Identifying where the gaps are in support for farmers going through a TB outbreak
- Exploring how those gaps in support could be filled on a local level to improve the quality of TB support available to farmers

Workshop attendees will have the opportunity to share their own experiences, highlighting gaps in support provided by Government and Charity organisations, and help to identify how TB support for farmers could be improved

#### **Declarations of interest:**

- Russell Ashford declared a Conflict of Interest because the applicant is his daughter. It was therefore decided that he would not be able to vote on this application, and would have to leave the room when the vote takes place.

#### **Discussion points:**

- The Panel questioned whether more than one location for the workshops had been looked at? It was confirmed that only one has been looked at, and that only one quote is needed for <£5,000.
- Can we expand the project to Devon-wide? Concerns as to whether the findings of these workshops would be translatable and accurate to the real issue within Devon as it is such a challenging issue within the whole county. Could it be broadened to include farms in South Devon and other areas on the fringes of Dartmoor?
- Panel confirmed they would be happy to involve and support farmers outside of the National Park to attend these workshops to add further value to their findings, since TB is not just limited to Dartmoor.

- Could the Devon NFU match fund this? It was confirmed that NFU have funding available to support projects like this.
- Panel suggested no restrictions on the locations of the 40 farmers being invited to attend the workshops, and that the offer should be opened to others.
- The Panel asked if the Experts involved in this project will be paid to do this work privately outside of their working hours, or will the payment go to their organisation inside of their working hours?
- Panel raised concerns over managing the expectations of the farmers who attend the meetings, ensuring that they don't anticipate that attending the workshops will provide answers and solve the issue. It was decided that attendee farmers need to have their expectations managed from the beginning.
- The Panel decided to set conditions to the project and agreed the total project cost could increase to acknowledge the extra workload that would go into expanding the overall scope.
- Panel flagged that no mental health support expert was mentioned and that it would be inclined to increase grant costs to include a mental health professional time/cost to support the farmers emotional wellbeing. The below suggestions were therefore made:
  - Farmer Community Network – specialist training/trainers
  - Questionnaire section around mental health for the workshops needs to be refined and improved.
- The Panel endorsed this application, feeling it merited additional funding in order to maximise its reach, impact and outcome.

### **Scoring**

The scoring by the FiPL team was confirmed:

	Score	Score after weighting
Project outcomes (Climate, Nature, People and Place) – 40%	6	2.4
Ability to deliver - 20%	8	1.6
Sustainability / legacy of projects - 20%	6	1.2
Value for Money - 20%	8	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>6.8</b>

### **Decision:**

**To approve subject to meeting the below conditions:**

1. The applicant should investigate including an appropriate psychologist/therapist for the workshops. They should look at the Farming Community Network in the first instance. This is to help provide farmers with emotional support during the workshops. Costings will be needed for their time as a specialist.
2. The payment for 'farmer time' should be reduced from £150 to £75, agreed as more appropriate. This would mean that more farmers could be invited, thus increasing impact and reach. For now, the costings should stay as at least 40 attendees, with scope for this to increase if needed.

3. It was agreed that at least 25% of workshop attendees should be based on Dartmoor, with other attendees coming from surrounding fringe areas, e.g. South Devon, Tamar Valley, Quantock Hills.
4. The applicant needs to clarify if the experts will be paid personally outside of their salaried time or paid to their organisation within their working time.
5. To reflect these increases in cost, the Panel awarded additional funding to a maximum project ceiling of £25,000. Remaining funds should go towards additional project management hours for the applicant.
6. If needed, £3,000 could be re-allocated from reduced costs towards additional administrative support, to reflect the additional workload. This is to be agreed with the applicant, with the maximum overall grant allowance not exceeding £25,000.

**FiPL team to email final costings that have been agreed with the applicant to attendee Panel members for their approval.**

**For:** 9 *\*Alison Clish-Green showed support of project during the discussions but left before the vote.*

**Against:** 0

**Abstained:** 0

**AOB:**

- Send dates of next LAP meeting
- Share map and pie chart with LAP members.

**Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025, Parke – location TBC.