

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 November 2014

**PRIORITIES FOR THE AUTHORITY 2015/16**Report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer)Recommendations: **That Members:**

- (i) **Agree the priorities for the 2015/16 Business Plan;**
- (ii) **Allocate £30,000 from the Match Funding Reserve as the Authority's contribution to "The Prince's Countryside Fund" bid for the continuation of the Dartmoor Hill Farm Project.**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 The Authority produces an annual Business Plan setting out its priorities and identifying key actions to achieve those priorities. Progress on delivering the Business Plan is monitored by the Authority's Audit and Governance Committee and we produce an Annual Review highlight key achievements/emerging issues at the end of the year.
- 1.2 Defra has indicated that our National Park Grant for 2015/16 will be £3,573,586. This is a 1.74% reduction on 2014/15 (equivalent to a cut of £63,249). In cumulative terms: the cut in national funding for the National Park over the period 2010/11 to 2015/16 is in excess of 40% in real terms.

**2 Vision – for the National Park and the Organisation**

- 2.1 The Management Plan – Your Dartmoor – outlines a clear vision for Dartmoor National Park which was consulted on extensively as part of the process of reviewing the Management Plan. The agreed vision for the National Park is:

Dartmoor, an inspirational place, where, in 2035:

- The natural beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage are conserved, sustained and enhanced
- Local people and visitors enjoy and learn more about the National Park
- Local communities and businesses prosper and benefit from Dartmoor's human and natural resources

The National Park is an exemplar in delivering a range of public benefits and leading the way in developing new approaches and thinking.

- 2.2 In support of the vision for the National Park, the Authority has developed a vision for the organisation which was agreed as part of the Business Plan for 2014/15 (NPA/14/002):

"Dartmoor is our Passion. We will act as an enabler and advocate for Dartmoor National Park; working with others to deliver a National Park that is thriving, inspirational and valued".

2.3 By this we mean:

**Enabler** - making things happen; generating and receiving ideas; experimenting and learning; prepared to take managed risks.

**Advocate** - raise the profile; the 'voice' for Dartmoor National Park; leading by example

**Working with others** - from local communities to Ministers

**Thriving** - from local businesses, farming and biodiversity to cultural heritage and local services

**Inspirational** - through the work we do, and the special qualities of the National Park, inspire people to: engage, enjoy and help look after the National Park; support and demonstrate how to live differently (i.e. within environmental limits); encourage people to try new things, learn more.

**Valued** - support for the National Park; recognition by local communities, visitors, Government and partners of the importance of the National Park and the work of the Authority

2.4 In addition, we have identified a number of core values which will underpin the way in which we work.

- ensure that our relationships with the public, partners and each other are founded on honesty, transparency, impartiality and consistency, demonstrating equality and fairness in everything that we do and being open to challenge
- value the people who work for Dartmoor - our staff, Members, and volunteers and seek to involve, empower and develop them
- place the environment at the heart of everything we do

### 3 Priorities

3.1 The current Business Plan for 2014/15 identifies six priorities for the Authority, in no particular order:

- Conservation of the natural and historic environment
- Work to support a sustainable farming economy
- Promote a positive experience of Dartmoor National Park for residents and visitors
- Work towards ensuring Dartmoor has a thriving local economy
- Improve support to and engagement with local communities
- Be an excellent organisation

3.2 Our Business Plan also sets out the way we will work. Whilst our work is presented under three themes: Sustain, Enjoy and Prosper our overall goal is to work in an integrated way (often with partners) to ensure that each work area or priority action considers and delivers across all three themes. A project might be focused on sustaining the natural environment but we will always look to ensure we consider and deliver links with the prosperity and enjoyment themes.

3.3 The priorities for the Authority are reviewed on an annual basis commencing in July each year at the annual Member workshop. Following the July 2014 workshop it is proposed that our priorities remain unchanged (see para 3.1 above) and that business plan actions for 2015/16 will be focused on delivering these six priorities. The workshop also identified the need for our work programmes to have a clearer focus on:

- **Engagement** – how we work with local communities and communities of interest to deliver for Dartmoor. We have a good track record in this area that we want to build on. Examples of the types of project/work we want to support include: community engagement in biodiversity and archaeology, management of access and development etc.
- **Communication** – more effective at talking with people about what we do, why and how and listening and responding to their views and ideas.
- **Evidence** – able to base our actions on evidence: to demonstrate the impact and value of what we do.
- **Funding** – opportunities to generate external income.

3.4 On 15 October the Authority hosted a workshop to review progress with the National Park Management Plan – Your Dartmoor. There was support for the six priorities identified above (see para 3.1) and ideas for new or revised actions to help deliver the priorities. The results from the workshop will be used to refresh the Your Dartmoor Action Plans and key actions which the Authority will lead on will be incorporated into the Authority's Business Plan for 2015/16.

#### 4 Hill Farm Project

4.1 The Dartmoor Hill Farm Project (DHFP) was established in 2003 as a joint project between the National Park Authority and the Duchy of Cornwall. It has a proven track record of success, built on three founding principles: listen, engage and deliver.

**Listen** – to the views and ideas of Dartmoor farmers

**Engage** – work with the farming community to find solutions, develop new project and support co-operation

**Deliver** – practical projects that support farm businesses, local communities and help sustain the special qualities of the National Park

4.2 DHFP has been a key delivery tool for the Authority's priority to 'support a sustainable farming economy' and help deliver the moorland vision of a grazed landscape.

4.3 From 2009, DHFP has benefitted from funding via the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) as have 'sister' initiatives on Bodmin and Exmoor. An independent evaluation published in 2013 concluded that the work had been well received and should be continued. In 2013 the Authority secured transition funding from Defra to effectively bridge the gap between the old RDPE and the new programme which is due to commence in January 2015. We understood that we would be provided with an opportunity to bid for continued funding under the new programme this Autumn. At the time of writing this report we have received no formal indication about future funding and no invitation to bid for continued funding.

- 4.4 Given the uncertainties about funding via the RDPE we are currently looking at other funding sources for the project and intend to submit a bid for £50,000 to “The Prince’s Countryside Fund”. At the time of writing this report this bid is still being finalised, but it will require approximately £30,000 of additional match funding from the Authority. If successful, this would provide financial resources for two years, enabling the continuation of the Project at the required level to deliver a new work programme agreed by the DHFP Steering Group.

## **5 Financial implications**

- 5.1 The 2015/16 revenue budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan will be built around the priorities identified above.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the £30,000 match funding required for “The Prince’s Countryside Fund” bid is taken from the Authority’s Match Funding Reserve. If approved, it would leave the match-funding reserve with a balance of £48,000. Our overall reserves are £2.894 million, though it should be noted that 36.5% of these are allocated.

## **6 Equality and Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 Under the Equality Act (2010) the Authority must prepare and publish one or more objectives it thinks it should achieve in pursuance of the general duty under the Act. The priorities outlined above are compliant with this requirement. In particular, the priorities around promoting a positive experience of Dartmoor National Park for residents and visitors and to be an excellent organisation will include specific actions which promote equality of access and awareness and understanding of diversity.

## **7 Conclusion**

- 7.1 In an era of reducing budgets it is important that we are clear about priorities and that these inform our Business Plan and work programmes.
- 7.2 The DHFP is a key mechanism by which we implement our priority on a sustainable farming economy. It has received positive independent validation, continues to be valued by the Dartmoor farming community and been held up as an example of good practice by Defra. The bid to “The Prince’s Countryside Fund” could provide an important resource to help sustain this initiative if there is no money forthcoming from the new RDPE.

KEVIN BISHOP

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK PLANNING AUTHORITY

7 November 2014

**TREE PRESERVATION ORDER: PEW TOR FARM, SAMPFORD SPINEY**Report of the Trees and Landscape Officer**Recommendation : That the Tree Preservation Order at Pew Tor Farm, Sampford Spiney be confirmed as made.**

- 1 A Tree Preservation Order was made under delegated powers to protect trees and woodland standing at the site of a proposed new farm unit at Pew Tor Farm, Sampford Spiney.
- 2 The Authority received a planning application to create a new farm unit at Pew Tor, Sampford Spiney. Several mature oak trees are growing around the boundary of the site and a small copse lies to the south. An assessment of the trees and woodland was made following Planning Practice Guidance. The trees and woodland are considered to be in good health with no evidence of serious structural weakness and with a life expectancy of over 40 years. The trees and woodland are visible in the landscape, particularly from the slopes of Pew Tor, a footpath that runs immediately north of the site and a minor road which run to the west. The trees and woodland are considered to be important features of Sampford Spiney and their removal would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area. The retention of the trees and woodland will help integrate the new farm unit into the landscape.
- 3 The applicant's intention was to retain the trees and woodland. However, an issue arose over the access into the site, the proposed access was to be via a gateway onto a minor road, but ownership of the verge could not be established and it was not clear whether the applicants had a right to use the gateway to access the farm unit. If the gateway could not be used an alternative access through the woodland was being considered, such an access would have had a significant impact on the woodland. Due to the change in circumstances it was considered expedient to protect the trees and woodland immediately with a Tree Preservation Order.
- 4 The Order was made under delegated powers on 3 July 2014. The Authority served the Order on all parties who have an interest in the land and given them 28 days in which to make representations regarding the Order. No objections to the Order have been received and Plasterdown Grouped Parish Council has written to the Authority supporting the making of the Order.
- 5 Since the Order was made the access issue has been resolved and access onto the site will be via the existing gateway and not through the woodland. Planning permission for the farm unit was granted by members at their meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

- 6 The Order has been made under the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012, which means the trees have immediate, but provisional protection for 6 months. If the Order is not confirmed within six months the provisional protection comes to an end. Having made a provisional Order the Authority has three options:
1. confirm the Order as made;
  2. not confirm the Order.
  3. modify the Order and confirm the modified Order.
- 7 If the Order is confirmed it will protect the trees in perpetuity. Once an Order is confirmed the management of the trees will be controlled by the Authority. However, work to the trees will still be permitted if it is considered to be acceptable management. If the Order is not confirmed the trees will not be protected and the landowner will be able to carry out works to the trees, including felling, without the consent of the Authority.
- 8 Considering the visual amenity value of the trees and woodland, and that no objections to the Order have been received, it is recommended the Order be confirmed as made.

BRIAN BEASLEY

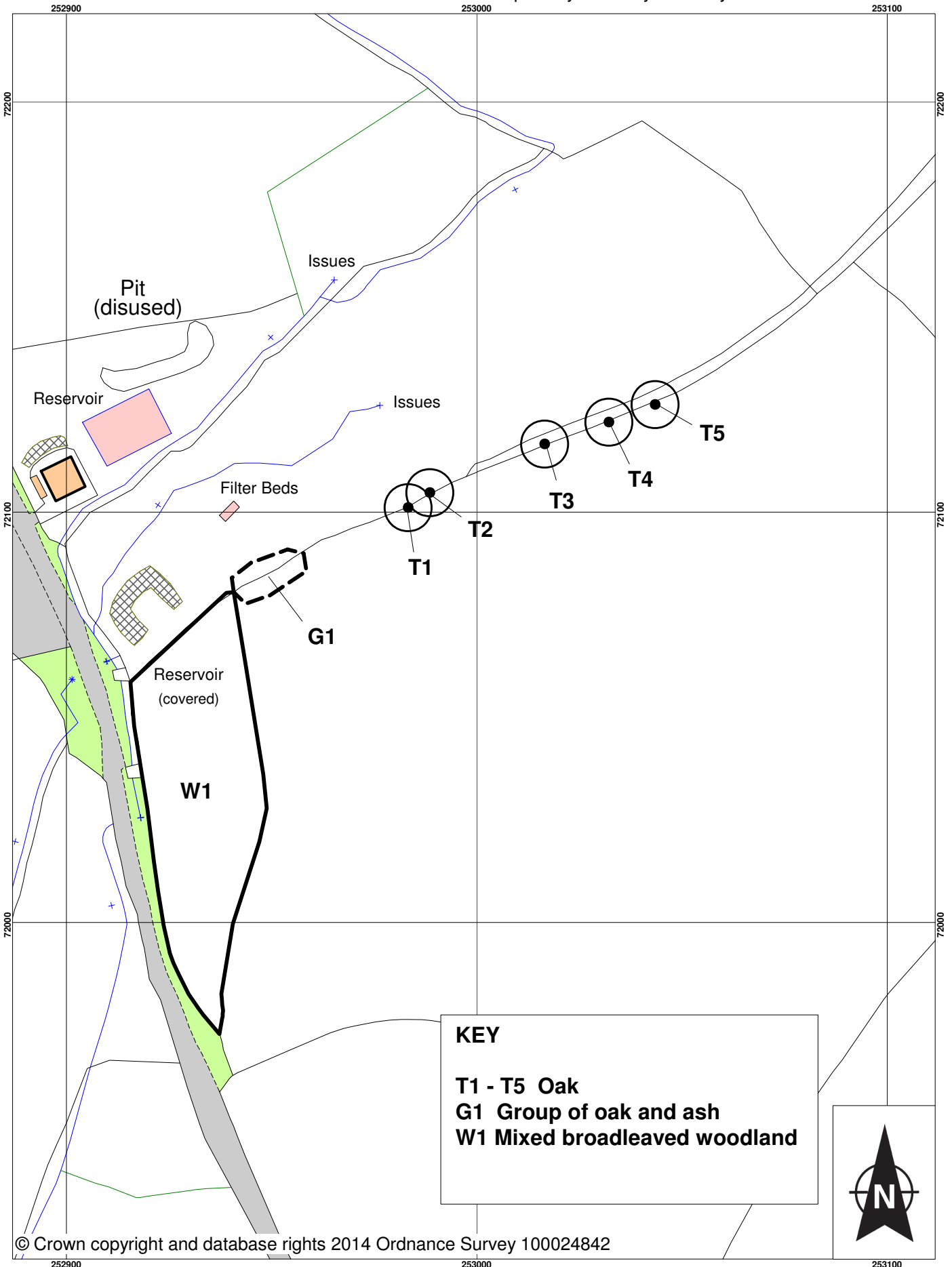
# Dartmoor National Park Authority

## Pew Tor Farm, Sampford Spiney



Scale 1:1250

Compiled by bbeasley on 2 July 2014



## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK PLANNING AUTHORITY

7 November 2014

**TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS AND SECTION 211 NOTIFICATIONS  
(WORKS TO TREES IN CONSERVATION AREAS)  
DETERMINED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**Report of the Trees and Landscape OfficerRecommendation : **That the decisions be noted.****TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS****South Hams****Ref: 14/0034****Greenfield, South Brent****SX 6694 5952**

Application to fell a cypress tree. The tree is in poor condition having shed several branches in recent months, it poses an unacceptable risk to the adjacent property. Consent was granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Five working days' notice to be given to the Authority prior to the commencement of approved works.
2. Replacement planting of one whitebeam within the crown spread of the original during the first planting season following felling.

**Teignbridge****Ref: 14/0031****Bossell Park, Buckfastleigh****SX 7367 6592**

Application to fell a mature Western red cedar tree. The tree dominates the adjacent properties, several branches have recently failed and there is concern about the long term safety of the tree. The tree is not in a dangerous condition, but there is widespread support within the local community to fell the tree. Consent was granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Five working days' notice to be given to the Authority prior to the commencement of approved works.
2. Replacement planting of one silver birch within the crown spread of the original during the first planting season following felling.

**West Devon****Ref: 14/0030****Moorview, Dousland****SX 5385 6898**

Application to fell two mature spruce trees. The trees are in poor condition and pose an unacceptable risk to the adjacent property. Consent was granted subject to the following conditions:



1. Five working days' notice to be given to the Authority prior to the commencement of approved works.
2. Replacement planting of two silver birch within the crown spread of the originals during the first planting season following felling.

**Ref: 14/0033**

**The Rectory, Drewsteignton**

**SX 7360 9079**

Application to fell a sycamore tree and remove crossing branches from a yew tree. The sycamore has a large cavity in the main stem and the works to the yew are minor. Consent was granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Five working days' notice to be given to the Authority prior to the commencement of approved works.
2. All works are carried out in accordance with British standard 3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations.

## **SECTION 211 NOTICES**

### **West Devon**

**Ref: 14/0032**

**The Green, Horrabridge**

**SX 5144 6994**

Notification to fell a mature Norway maple tree. The tree is in poor condition.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

**BRIAN BEASLEY**

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF DEVON

### Rural Futures Conference 25 September 2014

Approximately 80 people attended and as one would expect most were from Parish Councils.

The first speaker was the **CE of the Plunkett Foundation**, an organisation supporting rural communities to take control of the issues that matter to them, such as saving the pub or shop from going. He was a lively speaker and felt that with media connections worldwide communities should be striving to go back to years ago when the local community organised the church which can now be used for several organisations and to run local shops, taking over farms etc. Currently 30 pubs over the country have been taken over by the community. Creativity is more important than money! People consider they have no expertise to organise these projects but 99% survive against 45% of other enterprises. The community should think first about problems arising should their facilities close.

The second speaker was the **CE of ACRE** “the voice of the rural community”. She concentrated on voicing rural concerns in Whitehall. Village halls are very important in the community as they cater for all age groups with all different requirements and have adapted with society and progressed from when they included wash rooms! The main problem is that volunteers have declined. Newcomers to communities should be encouraged with bringing forward new ideas. People working more from home should be taken into account as they miss the inter-action of working in an office. One of those attending felt village halls, should have greater inter-action to exchange good, and bad, ideas.

Dr Simon Kerr, a GP, spoke about the new **Devon CCG**, formulated 2 years ago, something about which I knew absolutely nothing! This is a commissioning group advising on managing how to run the NHS in the area to support people to live healthy lives in a healthy communities. They run a budget of £1.1b! They hold a public meeting once a month for anyone to attend. Devon’s problem is our ageing population. Frailty of our population in future years is most important to deal with. Areas where hospitals are “closing” should take into account that that building would be used for other health service uses, making it more efficient for the hospital service to be in one place. The future of carers is vital. Concern was expressed that visitors to those in hospital would have further to travel but Dr Kerr said volunteers would be encouraged to help.

The CE of **Active Devon** said his role was to work with the Board to determine their direction and to ensure progress towards our vision of everyone in Devon having an active life through delivery of plans through their network of partners and stakeholders. More men than women are inactive and inactivity kills more people than alcohol. They help set up activities for all ages including archery and cycle rides for those with small children in buggies.

**Roland Pile, the Policy and Partnerships Manager at DCC** emphasised that central government was reducing their budget. Services have to be more locally run. Communities must trust others to help find solutions. For instance libraries must support themselves in other ways. The suggestion that communities could be trained by a Warden to fill in pot holes was not very well received by one delegate (an ex member of this Authority!) who suggested that our ageing population of 85 year olds could not do this!

Finally, a panel session was held with speakers as well as the Bishop of Exeter, the Chairman of Devon Country Agricultural Association, the Lord Lieutenant of Devon and Cllr Barry Parsons of DCC who is cabinet member for Performance and Engagement. Questions raised were the problem of getting snappy forward thinking Parish Councillors – only about half of PC attendees had had an election in their parish last time – and younger people need to be encouraged to stand. There seemed to be a lack of understanding about how affordable housing could be built without this causing the price of houses for sale to rise. Mobility of young and old people who could not drive with a reduction in bus services was a problem. Localism has not really come to fruition.

Diana Moyse  
26 September 2014

## **DARTMOOR SOCIETY DEBATE 2014**

### **“What Future for Railways and their Heritage on Dartmoor?”**

**Meldon Village Hall on 11 October 2014**

60 – 70 people attended this debate - a large proportion being men!

Dr Tom Greeves opened the seminar with an extremely interesting talk with many photographs on the archaeology of tramways and railways on Dartmoor over the last 200 years, starting with horsedrawn tramways for peat and china clay workings and later with trains from 1807 with the building of Dartmoor Prison in Princetown. Plans included a train line right across the middle of Dartmoor with a considerable rise towards the Warren House Inn. The Princetown railway closed in 1956.

Next Bernard Mills gave a talk on the original stations with lots of interesting photographs of all types of engines and he remembered the numbers of them all! I also learnt that where there were two signals saying the same thing but apart and higher, this was the engineers' way of showing what was ahead but further away.

This followed a discussion on whether we are looking after our railway heritage properly? DNPA came up immediately with the possible demolition of a railway shed at Ashburton. If this was necessary, could it be moved elsewhere? Concern was raised as to how many such sheds there were left on Dartmoor. It was suggested that DNPA should do an audit of rail structures across Dartmoor but it was accepted that money and staff power might be a problem. It was queried whether some of the railway enthusiasts could carry this out with some financial help from DNPA. This will be followed up by the Society.

After lunch Richard Searight from the Peninsula Rail Group explained that his group wanted to augment the Dawlish line. There was a difference of opinion about how much the Meldon viaduct would cost to take trains, or whether this was needed, but much less mention about bridges and viaducts elsewhere towards Tavistock from Okehampton. He felt the railway could run alongside the cycle track but this was strongly disputed by a volunteer from Sustrans but his views were not very well received. Journey times were also disputed, depending on the number of stops at stations, but it did seem it would be quicker than the Dawlish route. Both Richard Searight and the group started off by Okehampton Town Council members were really enthusiastic about opening this railway up. They also had even more support from Town/Parish Councils into opening up lines in Cornwall.

Colin Burges gave a talk on his work on the Exeter & Teign Valley Railway but this proved a bit technical for me!

Next there was a short discussion on whether the Princetown railway should be reopened to help Princetown, especially along the heritage route, and to help those to see Dartmoor for what it is but could not walk too far on to the moor itself.

Finally, there was, as would be expected, considerable enthusiasm for the Okehampton/Tavistock line to be reopened. Following a ministerial visit Richard Searight had a one hour appointment at Westminster to discuss their proposals further which would include input from both MPs for the area. Proposals to include lines to Cornwall to help especially their tourist trade went down well.

Those present were encouraged to support the Tavistock railway in every way they could by being proactive towards its inception.

Diana Moyse  
15 October 2014