

**DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**Friday 7 December 2018**

**Present:** A Cooper, K Ball, G Gribble, P Harper, S Hill, M Jeffery,  
J McInnes, D Moyse, N Oakley, R Parkinson, M Retallick,  
P Sanders, P Woods, D Webber

**Apologies:** S Barker, W Cann, J Christophers, P W Hitchins, C Pannell

**3398 Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 2 November 2018**

The Minutes of the Authority meeting held on 2 November 2018 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

**3399 Declarations of Interest**

None

**3400 Chairman's Report**

The Deputy Chairman confirmed the success of the Parish Council Local Plan meeting on 5 December 2018, where over 50 people attended. He also outlined a recent event with a group of farmers seeking their views on the future direction of farming in the National Park in light of Brexit.

There had been a meeting of the Dartmoor Steering Group which seeks to reconcile the interests of military training and National Park purposes and reports to both the Ministry of Defence and Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) informed Members that the Chairs of the UK National Parks had recently met. They received an up-date on commercial sponsorship activity from National Parks Partnerships Limited; a presentation on brand development work; and discussed a proposal to establish a UK National Parks communications team.

There was a National Parks England meeting consisting of the 10 English National Parks where the National Parks collective response to the Government's review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty was agreed by the Chairs.

The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) thanked those Members who have already attended Local Plan meetings.

**3401 Items requiring urgent attention**

None

**3402 Public Participation**

None

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**3403 Independent Review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) (NPA/18/036).

This initiative is the most important review of National Parks since the 1990's. The terms of reference referred to in paragraph 1.3 of the report include the financing and governance of National Parks. The review has issued a public call for evidence with a deadline of 18 December 2018. The paper being considered by the Authority highlights the key points that it is proposed are communicated in our evidence to the review.

Members' attention was drawn to section 2 of the report which suggests an updated vision for the 'Peoples' Charter' that underpins our National Parks. The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) identified that the key USP for the National Park Authority is partnership working: almost everything we do is via working with others.

Members commented on the proposed vision and the key messages. It was suggested that the final submission should include examples of existing projects and our ideas about future initiatives regarding the socio-economic well-being of our local communities.


Members' were informed that the new Environment Land Management Scheme (ELMS) that the Government will introduce post Brexit could be a key tool for managing and enhancing the National Park. It was agreed that for this potential to be realised the new scheme needed to co-designed at a local level and specific to Dartmoor.

Members agreed the importance of ensuring that our National Parks remain places for people and supported the points about ensuring all young people have an opportunity to visit a national Park and seeking resources to extend the current models of Ranger Ralph and Junior Rangers. It was highlighted that new powers and resources would be needed to tackle growing numbers of visitors to the National Park and the small (but apparently growing) number of visitors who do not respect or act in a responsible manner in the National Park.

Members expressed their concerns about the need for financial resources to deliver an enhanced National Park.

The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) highlighted to Members the statement at 4.31 of the report: 'If the Government is serious about sustaining and enhancing our National Parks for future generations then it needs to 'enhance and sustain National Park Grant'.

There was some discussion around governance regarding election of Members, role of Members and size of the Authority. The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) commented that if direct elections were introduced then the costs of these elections should be provided for by central Government and not taken from National Park Grant.

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It was agreed that the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) will email the draft wording on governance to all Members.

**RESOLVED: Members:**

- (i) Agreed the key recommendations outlined in this report as the basis for the Authority's formal submission to the Government's review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- (ii) Identified comments they wish the Authority to make about how to further improve the governance of national Parks at an individual and/or collective level; and
- (iii) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive (National Park Officer), in consultation with the Chairman, to agree the Authority's final submission to the review.

**3404 Heart of the South West Joint Committee**

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) (NPA/18/037).

Members' attention was drawn to the progress made by the Committee.


**RESOLVED: Members:**

- (i) Noted the progress report setting out the work of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Joint Committee since its establishment in March 2018;
- (ii) Agreed to delegate the development and endorsement of the HotSW Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) to the HotSW Joint Committee (noting that final approval of the HotSW LIS rests with the HotSW Local Enterprise Partnership and the Government);
- (iii) Agreed the Budget and Cost-sharing Agreement set out in Appendix B to this report;
- (iv) Noted the Budget statement for 2018/19 set out in Appendix B and that, in accordance with the decisions taken at the time the Committee was established, the Authority will be asked to make an annual budgetary provision to meet the support costs of the Joint Committee in line with the 2018/19 contribution (a minimum of £1,400 per annum);
- (v) Noted that clarification on any additional 2019/20 budget requirement will be provided following the completion of the review of the Joint Committee's role, function and management support arrangements and development of its work programme for 2019/20.

**3405 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 – Statutory Review of West Dart River Valley Dog Restriction**

Members received the report of the Head of Recreation, Access and Estates (NPA/18/038).

The report sets out the background to the restriction. There is a duty by the Authority to review long-term restrictions every 5 years. Members' attention was drawn to the map in the report showing the restricted areas. The Head of Recreation, Access and Estates, confirmed that the exclusion on dogs does not

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apply to the three Public Rights of Way (PROW) within the restricted area. Previous reviews expressed growing concerns that the restrictions were overly restrictive.

The Authority has undertaken detailed assessments including ecology survey, access assessment, Access and Sensitive Features Assessment (ASFA) and visitor monitoring. Through these assessments there is a better understanding of levels and patterns of use.

There have been two public consultations with the second consultation being on the proposed variation. There has been broad support from Dartmoor Access Forum (DAF), Natural England's nature conservation specialists, the Authority's ecologist and user group organisations. The recommendation is to lower the level of restriction from a total exclusion on dogs, to a requirement to have dogs on leads at all times all year round with the restriction zone. Assistance dogs used by members of the public will be exempt from the restriction.

In conclusion, the area remains important for wildlife. Visitor numbers remain low and are mostly kept to public rights of way. The assessments conclude that a lower restriction will not have a significant impact. The mitigation measures proposed are to update on-site access information with key messages for dog owners and to continue with visitor monitoring combined with the assessments show that a sensible approach would be for the current access restriction to be lowered to a dogs on leads at all times within the restricted area. This will be reviewed every five years but can be reassessed earlier than the next review date if circumstances change.

**RESOLVED:** Members approved the variation of the current access restriction to exclude dogs from the West Dart River Valley, to a dogs on leads restriction all year round.

#### **3406 Members Attendance**

Members received the report of the Head of Organisational Development (NPA/18/039).

The Head of Organisational Development summarised the report and confirmed that this had also been discussed at Standards Committee.

It was suggested and agreed that numbers would be shown rather than percentages as these can sometimes make the records look skewed.

**RESOLVED:** Members agreed to the publication of attendance by each Member at Authority Committee meetings (to include: Authority meetings, Development Management Committee, Audit and Governance Committee and Standards Committee).

#### **3407 Moor than Meets the Eye (MTMTE) Landscape Partnership Scheme Year 4 Progress Report**

Members received the report of the Moor than meets the eye Scheme Manager (NPA/18/040)

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**RESOLVED:** Members:

- (i) Noted the progress to date; and
- (ii) Noted that a six month report will be presented at 24 May 2019 Audit and Governance Committee and end of Scheme report to Authority in December 2019

**3408 New Homes Bonus & The Dartmoor Communities Fund**

Members received the report of the Communities Officer (NPA/18/041).

The Communities Officer updated Members with a summary of the achievements over the four years that the Communities Fund has been running. A total of £166,000 has been awarded to support projects with a total value in excess of £700,000. These projects have included direct voluntary/in-kind match funding in excess of £65,000 from local community volunteers and businesses.

The future of the fund is dependent on New Homes Bonus monies. It has been unviable to open the Fund to full applications this year due to the reduced contributions and therefore the monies will be rolled forward to 2019/20.

The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) confirmed that Teignbridge District Council were offering a payment of £10,000 for 2018/19, not the £15,000 referenced in the report.

**RESOLVED:** Members noted the content of the report.

**3409 Connecting Actively to Nature**

Members received the report of the Senior Learning and Outreach Officer (NPA/18/042).

The *Naturally Healthy Project* successfully demonstrated the considerable change and benefit that can be achieved at a locality level and resulted in a legacy group in the form of the *Buckfastleigh Naturally Healthy Group* which continues with activities.

To reach wider and larger audiences the small resource and capacity of the staff of Dartmoor National Park Authority can be furthered by working with partner organisations. Working with Active Devon (Community Sport Partnership) and with other partners Dartmoor can be a part of the *Connecting Actively to Nature* project (CAN).

CAN is a national initiative, five year programme, funded (£500,000) by Sport England and was officially launched in July. To be a partner for five years the Authority only had to contribute a small amount of match funding (£1k p.a. = £5,000 over five years). This small amount of funding to join CAN brings opportunities to achieve a much wider result.

As well as working with partner organisations at a local level through CAN there are links and service provision from a network of regional and national Public Health organisations demonstrating the wider reach of the project.

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RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report.

**3410 Tree Preservation Orders and Section 211 Notifications (Works to Trees in Conservation Areas) Determined Under Delegated Powers**

Members received the report of the Trees and Landscape Officer (NPA/18/043).

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report.

**3411 Draft Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee Meeting Held on Friday 2 November 2018**

Members noted the content of the draft minutes.

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