

# Dartmoor Farming in Protected Landscapes

## Local Assessment Panel

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Parke and via MS Teams

**Attending:** Russell Ashford (Chair), Peter Harper, Martin Perryman, Mark Walker, John Howell, Dan Alford, Helen Booker, James Sharpe

**Apologies:** Will Dracup, Layland Branfield, Eamon Crowe, Paul Dean.

DNPA FiPL officers: Kerry Smith, James Sharpe

**Conflicts of interest:** Russell Ashford, own application for Bowden Farm.

Minutes of last meeting will be circulated by email, Sam Taylor currently on annual leave

### Applications over £5k

#### Merripit and Greyhound Farms

Overview of project score by JS

#### **Discussion points:**

Are public rights of way DNPA's responsibility? (JS yes but FiPL can fund additional benefits)

Dogs worrying livestock is a significant issue, so we should support this.

What is the DNPA charge for diversion? These are for legal costs, the route being used is better ground but not the definitive map route, proposal is to formalise the route people are using.

The number of events seem high. We only pay claims for this activity in arrears.

Need to check for any planning consent required and also with DNPA Access team.

#### **Decision:**

8 votes for. Approve.

### Narracombe

Overview of project score by JS

#### **Discussion points:**

JS confirmed Woodland Management Plan (WMP) has been shared as part of the application.

Question over need for biochar, Dartmoor soils organic rich naturally, but as a product to sell elsewhere has some merit. Untested business, not very big or profitable with a lot of hard work.

£2k pa return, is it sustainable in the longer term. What about log production to start the business and customer base?

Concern over value for money?

Woodland management concern, retort only takes half time of kiln so could take higher quantity of material than are available from their woodland. So to make it work in reality they may need to import wood.

Point of charcoal is a product from the small round wood, so really need a log splitter? Appears to be like an operation that would import wood

Panel should see the WMP and any other docs.

Some WMP of panel members require leaving 40% dead wood habitat, this is good approach for waste wood contribution to biodiversity.

Why not start small and build customer base, why is biochar required on this setting, better for market targeted at gardens and outside Dartmoor.

**Decision:**

Defer, need to see more detailed business plan which looks at all approaches in including risk etc Capital items are excessive for the level of business described and level of return.

**Kirkside Farm**

Kerry intro provided introduction and overview of the proposal.

Land in poor state including boundaries, so needs phases of improvement to bring it back into good management. KS also working on water meadow restoration, second app, third app would be enhancing sward in intensively managed field.

**Discussion points:**

Qs why need water supply if sheep there now, why do cattle need water that sheep don't use now? KS currently sheep water from stream. No water for stock in the field, cattle in stream would be damaging.

Would produce quite a lot of fruit but not enough for commercial scale, have they thought about this?

If introducing cattle and ponies, are they reducing sheep?

KS - removing sheep altogether. Not their sheep, buying own cattle and ponies.

Half cost water supply, why not capital item under stewardship when capital costs for first two years?

KS app says agent missed water off cs app and NE have said no to adding it.

Could we ask Eamon to enquire?

KS NE are not accepting any amendments as they don't have resource.

Opportunity for public access, link in with existing footpath network.

Don't know if they've looked at that KS

Looking at the future public money for public good, this could include access

Is the internal fencing in good order or are they going to come and ask for more from us for those Ks yes the internal fencing is good and renewed

Regarding the capital works missed off agreement, could cancel agreement, pay back money and start new agreement

Seems a significant mistake for the agent to make, feels uncomfortable that fipl is asked to back fund this.

But agreement is the landowner's responsibility, know what was in the agreement

Can we check if there is another route for funding water system, or we accept entirety?

You do have to meet high spec for cs water systems.

(JS checked CS requirements for troughs)

**Conditions:** to work to cs standard, also cs spec for tree guard

**Decision:** 8 for, approved.

## Bala Brook

Overview of project score by JS

### **Discussion points:**

Looks good, approach guided by survey

Agree with adopting cactus guards, weld mesh wouldn't work against stock.

Standard cactus guard very small, native trees need more room.

Question over number of years funded for bracken control. Hist env not on access land.

Crushing bracken more effective, 60% kill if crushed at right time. Twice in one year. Other Panel Members use weed wipe or spray. And others on stony ground use chemicals, cutting can make bracken stronger

Cutting three times can work with strimmer

Ask about providing public access, discussed open access not compatible with aims of the Trust.

Concern about cost of tree guards, Panel member has tried every type of guard, and all can fail.

### **Conditions:**

New planting 90% establishment rate is FC expectation. Also, bracken reduction, give them target outcome.

Can provide photographic evidence. 90% tree establishment in two years' time.

### **Decision:**

6 for 2 against

## Bowden Farm Education Facilities

RA left the room for the duration of this discussion.

Overview of project score by JS

### **Discussion points:**

Agree important to have facilities for these activities, applicant has been running farm education visits for a number of years, so this is building on established and successful operation.

### **Decision:**

7 for

RA returned to meeting.

AOB:

Future promotion of Dartmoor FiPL, which sites/events best to make ourselves available to Dartmoor community.  
Panel would like to see example projects from year one.  
Can we publicise outcomes to date