

# HOLNE PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held in Holne Village Hall on Tuesday 5 November 2024 at 7.30pm

Present:

CLLrs T Crook (Chair for this meeting), R Applegarth, M Fairman, L Grun and C McLean

Also present

Suzanna Hughes (Clerk), County Cllr Bullivant, District Cllr Pannell and one member of the public

The meeting was opened by the Chair at 7.30pm.

<b>051124.01</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cllr Owen</li><li>• County Cllr Thomas</li><li>• District Cllr Hancock</li><li>• Rob Steemson (DNPA)</li></ul>
<b>051124.02</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation</b> <p>Members were reminded of their responsibility to continually update their Notice of Registerable Interests and invited to state whether they have any interest in the items to be discussed during this meeting in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Unforeseen requests for a Dispensation to be considered at this point only if there was no way a Councillor would have been aware of such before the meeting.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.</p>
<b>051124.03</b>	<b>Open Forum</b> <p>Ross Gray asked if the Parish Council could keep him informed as to whether it intends to purchase an additional 'Animals Crossing' as raised in the last meeting. With regard to the offer of a free landmark tree, he suggested that, subject to the approval of Highways, this could be planted on the long triangle of land near Tumbly on the junction to Hembury Woods. It was agreed that a Rowan would be the most suitable option.</p> <p>County Cllr Bullivant attended the meeting to introduce himself. He is the Cabinet Member for Integrated Adult Social Care &amp; Health which is one of the largest financial responsibilities DCC has. He wanted to make members aware of the financial issues the Council is facing. £502million is raised through the council tax; the budget for Adult Social Care and Health is £360m. Children's Services is £260m so these two figures alone are in excess of the Council's total budget. They also receive grants from the government but this only leaves a total excess of £100m across the whole of Devon to spend on all other responsibilities (including highways). The demands made on Adult Social Care and Children's Services are growing at a rate of around 10% per year. The County, however, can only raise the precept by 5% which means there is a deficit of around £35m per year just for those two services. The County is working on efficiencies to ease this financial pressure. Another major concern is the increase in national minimum wage and employers' national insurance contributions. The costs incurred by businesses who provide their services to the County Council will be passed on, further exacerbating the financial pressures for DCC. This said, the County remains committed to repairing potholes and other highways defects and will continue to try and improve processes including communication, attitudes and equipment.</p>
<b>051124.04</b>	<b>Ratification of Minutes</b> <p>Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1 October 2024. It was agreed that they should be signed by the Chair as a true and correct record of those meetings.</p>

051124.05	<p><b>Reports</b></p> <p><b>5.1 County Council Report</b> Cllr Thomas sent some information about online training for snow wardens. Cllr Applegarth will attend this.</p> <p><b>5.2 District Council Report</b> Cllrs Pannell and Hancock sent a written report (copy attached). In addition, Cllr Pannell advised that SHDC are looking at introducing a two-tier parking charges system, one for locals and one for visitors, in all of their car parks. They are currently consulting with communities about this.</p> <p>The new government is keen to have elected mayors. They are also keen to streamline local authorities and so the idea of unitary authorities may be discussed again in the near future.</p> <p>He is aware that the Community Shop is struggling; he may be able to offer some financial help from the climate fund. The money will be used to run a social media campaign to raise the shop's profile and it also needs a new fridge/chiller.</p> <p><b>5.3 DNPA Link Member Report</b> Cllr Pannell circulated an update from DNPA (copy attached). Funding is a problem and DNPA is struggling to maintain services and attract staff.</p> <p><b>5.4 DNPA Ranger Report</b> No report.</p>
051124.06	<p><b>Finance and Governance</b></p> <p>Members approved the following payment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDF (DAAT mast: September - £16.38</li> <li>• G Partridge - playpark grass cutting - £170</li> <li>• Holne Village Hall (hire of hall Sept 2024 – July 2025) - £192.50</li> </ul>
051124.07	<p><b>Planning</b></p> <p><b>7.1 New applications/appeals</b></p> <p>7.1.1 0424/24 – Stonehangar, Holne Replacement dwelling and garage building</p> <p>After discussion, members agreed they have no objections to the application but have concerns about the visual impact of the development as it is stated in the application that the applicant intends to take down some of the existing screening.</p> <p><b>7.2 Decisions:</b> None</p>
051124.08	<p><b>Playpark</b></p> <p><b>8.1</b> Members received one quotation for the replacement fencing. It was noted that the proposed design is more agricultural than the existing fencing and members struggled to visualise how this would look. It was agreed that a picture should be requested and that the contractor should also be asked provide a quote for replacing like with like. In the meantime, two further quotes would also be sought. Cllr Crook agreed to draft a job specification (to include two x 4 ft gates) and all quotes would be considered in December's meeting.</p> <p><b>8.2</b> Members discussed the future of the Playpark Charity. It was agreed that, if this is something that members of the Parish Council could take over (as named Trustees) and provided the requirements were not too demanding in terms of number of meetings and annual returns, it would be beneficial to retain in some capacity to help with future fundraising. Cllr Crook would speak to the Treasurer of the Village Hall Committee to establish what these requirements might be.</p> <p><b>8.3</b> Members agreed that the field part of Playpark should now be reopened. The area containing the equipment would remain closed, however.</p>

	<p>There was a brief discussion about the future of the equipment. It was agreed that the Council needs to agree on which pieces of equipment need to be removed and whether any pieces can be repaired.</p> <p>Cllr Crook offered to put together an explanation sign to keep residents informed. If anyone in the community wishes to volunteer some time to help with the project, they would be most welcome.</p>
<b>051124.09</b>	<p><b>Highways and Footpaths</b>  <i>Residents are encouraged to report all potholes:</i>  <a href="https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/report-a-pothole/">https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/report-a-pothole/</a></p> <p>9.1 Members agreed to purchase a second 'Animals Crossing' sign for £45 so that there can be one facing each direction either side of Stoke Lane. Cllr Crook will organise this.</p> <p>9.2 Members considered a suggestion made in the open forum of the October meeting to promote an 'Adopt a Signpost' scheme. After a discussion, it was agreed that the Council would not be able to endorse such a scheme as volunteers would need to be Chapter 8 trained to carry out any work on the highway. Signs would therefore remain the responsibility of DCC.</p> <p>9.3 New highways/footpath issues and update on matters previously reported  Cllr Applegarth advised that the style next to the new style installed at O'Brook has rotted. The clerk will inform Rob Steemson.</p> <p>Cllr Crook reported that there was a drainage issue in a field due east of the first Venford car park. A pipe has been installed to alleviate one issue but it has caused another problem elsewhere. The clerk will inform Rob Steemson.</p> <p>Members noted that that a piece of wall has fallen down next to the footpath into the churchyard from near Stares Nest. A church warden has put up signs rerouting users to the lower churchyard gate as further stones could fall. It is believed that SHDC are responsible for this as it forms the boundary the closed churchyard for which they have responsibility.</p>
<b>051124.10</b>	<p><b>Climate and Biodiversity Emergency</b>  There was a Sustainable South Hams online briefing on Friday 11 October but members were unable to attend due to work commitments.</p>
<b>051124.11</b>	<p><b>Free Landmark Tree</b>  As discussed in the open forum, it was agreed to accept the offer of a Rowan Tree from Devon Wildlife Trust. The clerk will contact Highways about the proposed planting location.</p>
<b>051124.12</b>	<p><b>Christmas Tree</b>  It was agreed to order a tree from Ashburton Christmas Trees (approx. 10 -12 feet) to be delivered to Holne around 1 December.</p>
<b>051124.13</b>	<p><b>Leats</b>  Cllr Applegarth advised that the leats were flowing well. He has been made aware that a leat running across a landowner's field has channeled itself deep into the ground impacting the flow in an adjacent landowner's field further down. It was agreed that this was a matter which the landowners themselves would need to resolve.</p>
<b>051124.14</b>	<p><b>Correspondence</b>  The clerk advised that she had received an email from Richard Hosking (who intends to stand in the County elections in 2025) asking if he could attend the Parish Council in January. Members agreed that he would be most welcome.</p>

051124.15	<b>Chairman's urgent business for action by the clerk if covered by delegated powers or for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting</b> None
051124.16	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b> It was confirmed that the next meeting is 3 December 2024.

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Cllr Owen (Chair)

# District Councillors' Report

## November 2024

### Active Travel on Dartmoor

Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) has been awarded funding from Active Travel England to develop a Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

This will be similar to the LCWIP that we are completing, but with a greater focus on leisure trips given the rural populations and the high visitor numbers to the national park.

DNPA want to hear about the new active travel routes or ideas you would like to see developed, and any existing active travel routes that need improvement.

You can learn more about the project and comment on the DNPA website.

### Pension Credit Take Up Campaign

The Cost of Living and Financial Support Officer will shortly be sending letters to pensioners who are currently receiving housing benefit and/or council tax reduction and whose income falls below the threshold to claim Pension Credit Guarantee Credit (PCGC).

The letter advises the resident to make a claim for PCGC as soon as possible and signposts them to the PCGC calculator and to organisations, including the Council, that can assist them with any questions or help complete an application form.

Pension Credit can be worth on average £3,900 per year and, from this year, it will automatically passport eligible pensioners to receive the Winter Fuel Payment. 21 December is the last possible date to make a successful backdated claim in order to receive the Winter Fuel Payment.

The Cost of Living and Financial Support Officer is also arranging drop-in sessions at local libraries to try to reach residents that may need additional financial help. As soon as we have confirmed dates and locations we will provide Members with a further update.

There will be many more residents that could potentially be entitled to claim PCGC who may be struggling with their energy costs. We would like to identify and help these residents, but unfortunately we don't have the data.

How can you help?

You may be aware of residents in your ward that are struggling financially and we have set up an email address ([support.vulnerability@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:support.vulnerability@swdevon.gov.uk)) for you to refer their details to us.

To help us identify them, please can you provide their name, address and contact telephone number and confirm that you have obtained permission from the resident to pass on their details.

This could be anyone that is struggling financially, they don't have to be pensioners, although we do want to identify all pensioners that may be entitled to PCGC and not currently claiming.

### Change NHS

The government has launched 'Change NHS: help build a health service fit for the future' to have the biggest ever conversation about the future of the NHS.

Members of the public, as well as NHS staff and health experts will be invited to share their experiences, views and ideas for fixing the NHS via the online platform, [change.nhs.uk](https://change.nhs.uk).

The portal will be live until the start of next year, and available via the NHS App.

People who visit the website can:

- give their views on the NHS and health and care
- tell the government what they feel is working well and what needs improving
- share their experiences
- post their ideas for improving health and care in the future

The public engagement exercise will help shape the government's 10-Year Health Plan, which will be published in Spring 2025 and will be underlined by three big shifts in healthcare - hospital to community, analogue to digital, and sickness to prevention.

## **DNPA Link Member Report**

### **DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK FORUM BRIEFING NOTE**

**November 2024**

#### **NATIONAL POLICY, GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING**

##### **The Financial Challenge facing the Authority**

A common theme of our briefings since 2010/11 has been the financial challenge faced by the Authority. At the time of writing, we have no indication of National Park Grant (our core grant from Defra) for 2025/26 and beyond. We anticipate that, following the Budget on 30 October 2024, we will receive a one-year settlement for 2025/26 with the forthcoming Spending Review potentially providing a three-year settlement for 2026/27 – 2028/29.

The Authority's Medium-Term Financial Plan indicates a shortfall in our revenue budget for 2025/26 in excess of £500,000. Whilst we have been successful in securing external grant funding this money does not cover core services. We continually review our asset base to see if we can generate further income but the reality we face is that we own few assets that offer any form of income generation potential.

The establishment of the Dartmoor Foundation (see below) will, we hope, help secure funding to deliver projects that support the Partnership Plan but this will take time and we do not envisage that the Foundation will fund core costs.

##### **Dartmoor Foundation**

As previously reported, the Authority is establishing a 'Dartmoor Foundation' as a vehicle to raise funds to deliver National Park purposes. The legal structure will be a company limited by guarantee and, we hope, a registered charity. The company is now registered and we have started the process of applying for charitable status.

The founding trustees have been appointed:

Gemma Mortensen – Chair

Pauline McCracken

Jake Doxat

Nigel Topping

Alison Kohler

The trustees are in the process of recruiting a Chief Executive.

The Foundation will be strategically aligned with Dartmoor National Park Authority but separate from it. The two organisations will work together and collaborate closely but in its day-to-day operations, the Foundation has 'directive' control over its work and will function autonomously. It will be governed by its own board of trustees (see above), run by its own executive team and will work with a range of partners, not just the National Park Authority.

The Foundation will be a focus for fundraising; promoting collaboration, innovation and creativity and a practical delivery body that can act in ways that the Authority cannot. The aim is that the establishment of the Foundation will help secure the National Park for the next 75 years.

##### **Dartmoor Land Use Management Group**

The previous Government commissioned an independent review of protected site management on Dartmoor led by David Fursdon. The report from the review was published in December 2023. The new Government have decided to act on a key recommendation from the 'Fursdon Review' which was to establish a Dartmoor Land Use Management Group. Following a public appointment process Phil Stocker has been confirmed as the

Chair of the Group. Phil is the Chief Executive of the National Sheep Association but has also worked for the RSPB and the Soil Association.

The National Park Authority will provide the secretariat for the Group and is due to receive additional funding allocated for this purpose. The Group will be looking at a work programme that focuses on:

- Conservation Grazing
- Preparation of a Dartmoor land use framework (linked to the Dartmoor Partnership Plan)
- Development of a 'Dartmoor Observatory' – a 'virtual library' of research and monitoring evidence about the National Park spanning environment, social and economic factors.

Phil Stocker will, in discussion with the Farming Minister, determine membership of the Dartmoor Land Use Management Group.

### **Legal challenge regarding right to backpack camp under the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985**

As previously reported Mr and Mrs Darwall have challenged the legal right to backpack camp under the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985. The Supreme Court heard the case on 8 October 2024 and we now await their judgement. There is no timeline for the Court to issue the judgement.

In the meantime, the ruling by the Court of Appeal applies and the camping map on our website indicates where you can legally backpack camp. The camping map has been developed with landowners and backpack/access stakeholders. There is also an accompanying code of practice.

### **Goodbye and Hello**

This summer DNPA said goodbye to two Rangers, Bill Allen and Andrea Roberts, who have served Dartmoor for over 35 and 20 years respectively. Huge thanks to both of them for all that they have achieved and given to Dartmoor during that time.

Whilst that experience will be irreplaceable, we are delighted to welcome Kit Hancock and Luke Engel to Dartmoor National Park Authority's ranger team and congratulations to Stuart Hoopell who was promoted to Sector Ranger this summer. Fantastic appointments for Dartmoor and we wish them all the very best for their careers on Dartmoor.

## **SUSTAIN**

### **Cut Hill Burial Cist**

Cut Hill is one of five hills on Dartmoor that exceeds 600metres. Inside the military firing ranges it has dramatic, windswept views in all directions. All around is evidence of human activity from prehistoric monuments to peat passes. High and remote, it is a long and often difficult walk from any public facilities.

Following months of meticulous planning, a team of archaeologists spent three days excavating an Early Bronze Age cist at Cut Hill. Led by our Archaeologist Dr Lee Bray, painstaking work revealed an exceptional cist - a stone-built box into which the dead were placed in prehistoric times - containing preserved wood and other material yet to be identified.

Excavation works were prompted when reports were made to the Authority that the cist was eroding out of the peat. Once air gets to anything inside, any artefacts can start to deteriorate quickly so preservation was key.

In May 2024, Dartmoor National Park Authority gave unanimous support for a full archaeological intervention. The cist was carefully sealed and transported to a specialist laboratory where detailed examinations will be carried out to determine what, if anything, is contained within the wet peat underneath the wood.

The discovery has strong parallels to the stone-built burial box unearthed at Whitehorse Hill in 2011 which contained human remains and grave goods. The finds changed our understanding of Early Bronze Age life on Dartmoor.

### **Our Upland Commons**

The Our Upland Commons Project is drawing to a close, but it has delivered a variety of successful programmes across Dartmoor. These include the Healthy Livestock initiative which included looking at dung beetle diversity and abundance on common land. This study aimed to establish a baseline for dung beetle population in two Common Land areas and associated inbye lands, with a methodology designed for future monitoring. Key objectives included assessing species diversity and abundance compared to a control site and understanding the impact of current livestock management practices on dung beetle populations. The importance of this study was highlighted when it was referenced in the Independent Review of Protected Site Management on Dartmoor and will inform management practices.

The project also supported two stones from the Piles Hill double stone row being restored to their original upright position this summer. Extending 850m across Ugborough and Harford moors, the avenue of stones, described as one of the moor's "most enigmatic monuments", is thought to date back to the Neolithic or early Bronze Age - about 4,000 years ago.

The Our Upland Commons work celebrated its achievements by holding a conference at Buckfast Abbey in October.

Commons are complex, contested, multi-interest spaces, where typical approaches to conservation can falter. Through the Our Upland Commons project, the Foundation for Common Land and others have been developing people-centred, collaborative approaches to unlock commons' potential for nature recovery, flood management and carbon sequestration. This conference brought together key voices from commoning and conservation, to look towards an uncertain future, to share and explore collective approaches to the challenges we face.

### **South West Peatland Partnership – Restoration at Cranmere Pool**

A place of myth, legend, and history – Cranmere Pool is the birthplace of the Dartmoor letterboxing tradition and the location of many a tale about poor souls who haunt it still.

This winter season, an ambitious restoration schedule is set to begin, preventing further erosion of the peat, enhancing this important space for wildlife, archaeology and people, and to perhaps bring water back to the empty pool. Cranmere is at the heart of several Dartmoor legends, the most common of which involve the former mayor of Okehampton, Benjamin Gear, ordered to empty the pool with a sieve as punishment for stealing sheep.

Restoration works will aim to improve the hydrological functioning and health of the peat surrounding Cranmere Pool, as well as potentially restoring water to the pool. Works are focused on raising the water table locally, re-wetting the peat and helping to reduce erosion. This involves putting in peat bunds and reprofiling erosion channels within the peat.

### **Race to Zero**

In July it was announced that the UK's National Parks had become the first protected landscapes in the world to join the UN backed Race to Zero initiative.

Chair of Dartmoor National Park Authority Pamela Woods said: "Once again, National Parks are leading the way in climate action. It's fitting that this announcement comes in the 75th anniversary year of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; an act which secured access for everyone to our natural environment while preserving and enhancing their natural beauty."



Race to Zero commits cities, companies, regions, financial and educational institutions to take immediate and effective action to halve carbon emissions by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050 at the latest.

The UK's National Parks aim to become net zero by 2040 and become significant carbon sinks by 2050.

## **ENJOY**

### **Dartmoor Marshals**

For the fifth summer, marshals were deployed across Dartmoor to support the work of the National Park's Rangers. Marshals were first introduced in summer 2020 and have proved to be invaluable in supporting the Dartmoor Ranger team. As in previous years, Marshals supported that important work from May until mid-September. In the busier months they provide high-visibility patrols to reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour. They also play a vital role in engaging with visitors, so people feel safe and can enjoy the moor responsibly.

### **Dartmoor Rural Crime Initiative**

DNPA facilitates the Dartmoor Rural Crime Initiative alongside the Rural Crime team from Devon and Cornwall Police. Meeting twice a year the initiative brings together a number of agencies, commoners and landowners to highlight issues and opportunities on Dartmoor, to work together on initiatives and to ensure that information is shared effectively and with the right partners.

One example of this is the 'Dogs on Dartmoor' campaign which has seen the police, DNPA, National Trust and Dartmoor Livestock Prevention Society come together to hold events, engage with dog owners on Dartmoor and ensure a commonality of messaging and signage. This engagement has been well received and seen an increase in the number of dog owners acting responsibly by 'taking the lead' where required between March and July.

### **Meldon Wildlife Festival**

The family-friendly Meldon Wildlife Festival took place on Tuesday 20 August, hosted by Dartmoor National Park Authority alongside a range of wildlife and conservation organisations.

The day-long event at Meldon is a popular and well-established event in the Dartmoor calendar and is a great opportunity for families to get involved in a range of activities, all designed to tell the story of Dartmoor's nature in fun ways. It's a brilliant day where children get to play in a wild landscape while learning to appreciate the qualities that make the National Park so special. This year the Headwaters Team engaged people with the brilliance of bogs and also asked children to 'slow the flow' with their interactive models of a Dartmoor landscape as well as then having a 'slow the flow' obstacle course which proved to be particularly popular.

### **Active Travel Plan**

We want to give people the best opportunities to access Dartmoor. By providing safe, well connected active travel routes we can help you enjoy the National Park as part of a healthier lifestyle; support our goals in tackling climate change with more low or no-carbon transport solutions and ensure people who live and work on the moor benefit from safer travel.

To help us get there Dartmoor National Park Authority has been awarded £100,000 by Active Travel England to shape an active travel plan for Dartmoor. The funding will enable us to work with other organisations, including Devon County Council, to explore good walking, wheeling, cycling and horse-riding routes across Dartmoor.

As part of our initial information gathering, we're asking for people's views on where you think active travel projects will benefit Dartmoor – follow this link for more information [Active Travel Survey](#)

## **Dartmoor: A Radical Landscape**

This major photographic artwork exhibition has just launched at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery (RAMM) in Exeter and runs until 23 February 2025.

The artwork stretches from the late 1960s to the present day, all inspired by Dartmoor's unique and evocative landscapes and the range of artwork offers new ways of appreciating and understanding Dartmoor's special landscape and a consideration of its future.

The lead partner for the exhibition is the Dartmoor Preservation Association and DNPA was delighted to offer support by lending the internationally acclaimed Richard Long artwork 'Eight Days Walk', which sets the scene for the exhibition upon arrival.

## **PROSPER**

### **Digital National Park**

In December 2023 the Authority, in partnership with Wildanet, submitted a proposal to BDUK (a government agency charged with delivering gigabit broadband) to develop a Digital National Park.

Wildanet supported this proposal, at risk, through modelling to show how we could extend gigabit broadband and improved mobile connectivity and associated costs. We were hopeful that BDUK would support the initiative by allowing Dartmoor to be a Type A or Type B procurement process i.e. a tailored solution for Dartmoor. The proposal had economic, social and environmental benefits for the National Park and its communities.

We understand that BDUK have awarded a Type C contract to Openreach to deliver gigabit connectivity to premises on Dartmoor. This contract covers a much wider spatial area and is scheduled for delivery over a number of years. We have had no engagement in this process and are now seeking detail about delivery milestones and information on coverage.