



The National Park



Developing the Plan



The Plan



Delivering the Plan



Your Dartmoor

PROGRESS REPORT 2013

Dartmoor National Park
Management Plan

www.yourdartmoor.org

Your Dartmoor Progress Report 2013

Dartmoor National Park Management Plan

Introduction

The focus of attention during 2013 has been on the review of the National Park Management Plan but that has not stopped progress on key projects and delivery of the overarching ambitions. This report provides an overview of key achievements during 2013. These examples of strategic delivery are presented under the three themes and associated priorities that emerged during 2013 for the revised Management Plan – Your Dartmoor.

Sustain

Future of Farming and Forestry

Dartmoor Farming Futures – developing a new approach to agri-environment delivery

Dartmoor Farming Futures is an experimental pilot project aimed at developing a new approach to the management of the public and environmental benefits associated with Dartmoor's moorland. It is a partnership project involving the National Park Authority, Natural England, Dartmoor Commoners' Council and Duchy of Cornwall with support from South West Water, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Rural Payments Agency and Ministry of Defence.

The two pilots on Forest of Dartmoor and Haytor and Bagtor Commons are now operational. During 2014 two reports were published. The first describes the approach developed:

[Report to Dartmoor National Park Authority, Dartmoor Commoners' Council and Natural England](#) 

The second contains the results of an independent evaluation of the pilot to-date. The independent evaluation can be downloaded here:

[Dartmoor Farming Futures Independent Project Evaluation](#) 

This evaluation concluded that the key strengths of the DFF approach include:

- Open process
- Improved dialogue between the parties and development of closer working relationships
- Improved understanding of environmental features, ecosystem services and agri-environment schemes
- Empowered commoners to take ownership of outcomes, management and monitoring
- Re-unitisation and re-assessment of SSSI
- Improved verifiability arising from the outcome-focused agreement
- Greater flexibility

- Increased likelihood of positive outcomes from the agreement
- Increased level of support for commoners
- Generated enthusiasm amongst commoners and partners
- Independent facilitator role

The main weaknesses identified included:

- Lots of responsibility on the Commons Associations/Trustees
- Time required from commoners and partners to develop the project
- Not reaching/engaging some commoners

The independent evaluation highlighted that there was agreement amongst commoners and stakeholders that the DFF approach should be considered for inclusion in the new Rural Development Programme for England 2014 – 2020 and lessons learnt have been submitted to the Defra and Natural England team responsible for the development of the next programme.

The independent evaluation can be downloaded here:

[Dartmoor Farming Futures Independent Project Evaluation](#) 

Hill Farm Project Review

Since 2003 the Dartmoor Hill Farm Project (DHFP) has supported farmers on Dartmoor to establish and run a wide range of projects to add value to their businesses and to increase vocational skills. The DHFP has recently produced a [review](#)  of the last 10 years of activities supporting hill farmers on Dartmoor.

Hill Farm Training Scheme

The Hill Farm Training scheme aims to inform and education conservation professionals about hill farming and evaluate options for roll out and future funding. Eleven events were run, with 95 attendances, representing around 50 individuals. The scheme has been extremely successful and well received. The plans for 2014 include “24 hours on a Dartmoor hill farm” which should give conservation professionals a much deeper understanding of the workload and pattern involved in farming.

Spectacular Landscapes, Natural Networks

Living Dartmoor

‘Living Dartmoor’ is a strategy to deliver benefits for the wildlife of the National Park. It seeks to build on past gains accrued through the Dartmoor Biodiversity Action Plan and take forward wildlife conservation on Dartmoor in response to recent legislation and national initiatives. It has been produced by the Dartmoor Biodiversity Partnership, with an overall aim to co-ordinate work which will enable a network of healthy, diverse habitats to benefit wildlife, landscapes, people and natural resources over the next ten years. The main body of text is available on the [DNPA website](#), where delivery plans for the Key Wildlife Areas and Key Species for Conservation are being added as they are completed.

River management – Duchy of Cornwall

In 2010 the Westcountry Rivers Trust carried out a walkover survey of the Duchy of Cornwall owned sections of the East and West Dart Rivers; highlighting areas which required improvement from both an environmental and fisheries access perspective. This included control of invasive weeds, particularly Himalayan Balsam. High, medium and low priorities were identified through a written report and by March 2013, all priority works were completed using funding from the Duchy and Country Sports South West Project.

The Duchy is now progressing completion of the medium and low priorities.

The Dart and Teign River Improvement Project (DTRIP) started in May 2012 and is led by the Westcountry Rivers Trust. This RDPE funded project seeks to improve river and water management within the Dart and Teign catchments, targeting Catchment Restoration Funding. The Project ends in 31st March 2015. Specific targets are;

- *Countering the acidification of water
- *Reducing sediment
- *Tackling diffuse pollution
- *Removing barriers to fish migration
- *Improvement of spawning gravels

The Trust has completed extensive walkover surveys involving the West and East Dart, and sections of the West Webburn, Mardle, Swincombe, Cherrybrook, Blackabrook, Wallabrook, Blackaton Brook, Fingle Brook, Reedy Brook and Teign

Making the Most of Cultural Heritage

Historic Environment assessment

The Historic Environment Character Assessment (HECA), January 2014 has been commissioned to provide a more informed overview and understanding of the distribution, extent, and pattern of Dartmoor's heritage assets within the landscape for conservation and management purposes. It also provides a basis for a timeline and themes for research and interpretation by a wide range of interested people where the significance of heritage assets is better identified and more detailed information about Character Types sits in the context of the Historic Environment Record (HER). It is also intended to provide a reference background for understanding and telling the story of Dartmoor's heritage, especially in the context of the HLF 'Moor than meets the eye' project. The Character Assessment is presented as a report and GIS mapping and has been prepared by Fiona Fyfe Associates, Nottingham. It has been produced in consultation with DNPA and DCC Historic Environment and IT staff.

White Horse Hill Burial

The excavation of a prehistoric cremation burial discovered within a cist at Whitehorse Hill on northern Dartmoor has revealed nationally important remains which have captured the interest of experts from all over the country. This was the first excavation of a burial site on Dartmoor for 100 years. This is now considered to be the most important assemblage of prehistoric grave goods ever recovered from Dartmoor and indeed from the whole of the South West of England. The survival of the organic remains is also seen to be of international importance.

Approved by the Duchy of Cornwall as landowner, the excavation was carried out in August 2011. Co-ordinated by Dartmoor National Park Authority, the excavation was carried out by archaeologists from the Historic Environment Projects Team, Cornwall Council with assistance from English Heritage and Plymouth University specialists. The project was jointly funded by the Dartmoor National Park Authority and English Heritage, with contributions from a number of other local funders.

The basal stone and cist contents were taken to the Wiltshire Conservation Service laboratory in Chippenham where painstaking micro excavation of the contents took place.

After the excavation, the side and cover stones were left at the site and in December 2011, with the help of a MOD all-terrain vehicle, the base stone was returned to Whitehorse Hill for the process of reconstruction to begin. The Authority's Conservation Works Team, under the supervision of DNPA archaeologists, rebuilt the cist in its original location.

Analysis

The analysis work on the organic and the other artefacts from the Whitehorse Hill cist burial is nearly completed. These results are highlighting what an astonishing and exciting discovery this is, far exceeding original expectations. The work which has been funded by English Heritage, the Dartmoor National Park Authority, Devon County Council and a number of other organisations and private individuals has been carried out by specialists from English Heritage, British and European Universities and the British Museum.

The painstaking conservation work, which was undertaken by the Wiltshire Conservation Service, Chippenham has also finished and the artefacts will soon be transferred to the Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery. A summary of the results of all the analysis and conservation work can be seen [here](#).

ENJOY

Enjoying Dartmoor

Information and Interpretation Strategy for Dartmoor

Consultants were appointed to develop an Audience Development Plan and Interpretation Strategy for the National Park, this was part funded through Moor than Meets the Eye and part funded by the National Park Authority to allow the work to cover a wider area.. The methodology included a desk review, information gathering through street surveys, semi structured phone surveys and an online questionnaire and detailed conversation with key stakeholders and partners. The aim of this work was to provide a strategic and co-ordinated approach to the delivery of interpretation across the National Park

A strategy has now been produced; it has been included in proposal submitted in the second round bid to the HLF for Moor than Meets the Eye, a Landscape Partnership scheme. The strategy identified priority audience groups, it promoted the idea of the Dartmoor Story as a way to interpret the area and it recommended a hierarchical approach based around geographical hubs.

Tour of Britain 2013

Dartmoor National Park Authority was thrilled to host the finish of the Devon Stage of the Tour of Britain at Haytor. The cycle race saw 114 of the world's elite riders from 21 different countries complete the 85 mile stage which started at Sidmouth, travelled through Exeter, Chudleigh, and Moretonhampstead, before the riders tackled a gruelling hill climb finish at Haytor.

The largest ever crowd to a Devon Stage saw history in the making as the route from Sidmouth to Haytor provided the first ever summit finish in the modern era of the race, which was won by young Great Britain rider Simon Yates.

Independent research to measure the economic impact of The Tour, showed that the Devon Stage attracted around 250,000 spectators, with almost £5.9 million of additional spending injected into Devon's economy as a direct result of the 2013 stage.

[Economic Impact Report](#) 

Large Scale Organised Events Management - DNPA

Many different types of recreational event take place in the National Park every year, ranging from charity walks, cycle sportives, to multi-day challenge events and the famous Ten Tors. Dartmoor National Park Authority adopted a formal approach to the management of large recreation events in the early 1990s. In 2003, an organised event application and monitoring system, and associated code of conduct, was established to assist with avoiding clashes

between events and to help organisers plan their events in a sustainable manner.

Organisers for events involving more than 50 people on foot, or 30 cyclists or horse riders are encouraged to contact the Authority at an early stage in their planning process to help identify potential impacts. The Authority's policy towards recreational events is set out in the Authority's Recreation & Access Strategy 2011. The Authority publishes advice for people planning events within the National Park on its website.

Analysis of the number and type of events over recent years suggests the number of event applications reduced from 65 in 2008, to 49 events in 2011, whilst the number of participants increased from almost 9,000 to 12,000 for the same period. It would appear to suggest that whilst fewer events were taking place, the number of participants taking part in individual events was increasing. 2013 saw 65 events taking place with over 16,435 participants taking part.

By operating the Events management system DNPA has been able to:

- Advise organisers on route choices if crossing the commons
- Avoid routes passing through sensitive sites both for wildlife and archaeology
- Influence the timing of events to avoid the bird nesting season
- Avoid conflicts between events taking place in the same location or using the same areas

Organisers of large scale events are encouraged to consider contributing to the £ for the park initiative. Since its introduction it has resulted in additional £5000 of donations for access and wildlife conservation projects.

Large Scale Organised Events – Dartmoor Commoner Council

Large scale recreational events can be spectacular and raise the profile of Dartmoor's wonderful scenery. However such events can have a negative impact on those that live and farm on the Moor.

Whilst the number of events reported to the National Park Authority is not increasing the number of people participating in each event is increasing. Cycling events, in particular, can have a significant impact. The number of cyclists using short cuts and straying from the permitted bridle ways appears to be growing. Farmers are increasingly reported disturbance to stock, damage to paths and to the moorland. The Dartmoor Commoners' Council, Common's Associations and the DNPA are working closely to control the impact of such events and to educate the participants in the potential of their activity to damage the fragile environment and disturb livestock.

Note provided by Dartmoor Commoners' Council, John Waldon Chairman.

Dog Attacks – Dartmoor Livestock Protection Officer

Dogs attacking livestock, particularly sheep, remains a real problem on Dartmoor. The number of incidents reported to the Dartmoor Livestock Protection Officer, Mrs Karla McKechnie, and to the police rose slightly in 2013 to 69 reports. However the slight increase may be a reflection of the better publicity given to this terrible crime.

Of these incidents 47 were logged by the police and their efforts are essential. Recently one dog on Whitchurch Common killed one sheep, injured another and seriously disturbed the remaining flock. The dog was caught and destroyed after witnesses provided sufficient evidence. The dog's owner will also have to pay compensation to the farmer.

Less dramatic is the impact of dogs on where stock grazes. The constant presence of dogs can result in sheep and cows refusing to graze areas of the moor, and this can lead to excessive growth of vegetation that in turn can restrict public access. This effect is increased by packs of dogs running free – an scene all too familiar to those visiting such areas as Haytor Down where professional dog walkers often have 6 or more dogs under their "control".

Information will continue to be provided to remind dog owners of their responsibility to ensure their dogs do not kill or frighten livestock and the public are encouraged to report incidence to avoid livestock having to face a slow and painful death.

Note provided by John Waldon, Dartmoor Commoners' Council.

Paws on Dartmoor

Many visitors and local people exercise their dogs when enjoying Dartmoor. Although a dog may not be actively chasing livestock, its presence can still cause disturbance. During the lambing season pregnant ewes are particularly vulnerable. A frightened animal may abort or abandon its young – a tragedy for the animal and a financial loss to the farmer.

A new campaign was launched to promote responsible access to the countryside for those using Dartmoor National Park to walk their dogs. The campaign 'Paws on Dartmoor' was developed in response to the increasing number of incidents involving uncontrolled dogs and livestock but also provides advice to dog owners on canine health issues associated with taking your dog onto Dartmoor. The campaign has had widespread support and has had national recognition.

Litter

The Recreation and Access Strategy identified the challenge to reduce the amount of recreational litter and fly-tipping, and reduce the associated costs to the National Park Authority. One of the key actions from the Recreation Strategy has been to develop a litter campaign, which was launched in May 2013. The main theme of the litter campaign is "Love where you visit." We have adapted the Keep Britain Tidy Love where you live campaign for urban areas and made it relevant to Dartmoor.

The key messages are:

- We want all visitors to help us by taking responsibility for their litter
- Litter should be taken home or disposed of responsibly
- Help to reduce the amount of waste which goes to landfill by recycling as much as possible
- Place disposable BBQ's or camping stoves on a flat rock to prevent it burning the grass or other vegetation

Several resources have been produced to help promote the key messages:

- Large waterproof banners have been produced for our heavily used sites
- Branded panels for the outreach vehicle
- Posters are available for visitor centres
- Stickers and branded litter bags to encourage greater recycling
- Articles have been written for the press and magazines

This campaign really came to the forefront in the summer of 2013 after a sustained period of sunny weather brought huge pressures to some of the 'honeypot' sites on Dartmoor.

A further development of this campaign has been to develop banners for use during snow events when large amounts of sledging litter is often left behind after enjoying the slopes of Dartmoor.

Canoeing and fishing conflicts – Environment Agency

We work with organisations to seek to maximize the social, environmental and economic benefits of water-related sport and recreation in England and Wales. But we do want people to enjoy such recreation responsibly and legally. Occasionally canoeing and fishing interests can be in conflict. Our powers to protect fish relate to the Salmon & Fresh Water Fisheries Act. We have no powers or duty to stop people canoeing in sensitive areas such as spawning grounds but we would be concerned if canoeists showed "wilful disturbance" which is illegal. We usually find that canoeists are keen to avoid creating damage to fish and their spawning areas once they understand the risk to them. We can raise awareness of the risk from disturbance by liaising with the British Canoe Union and also directly with canoe clubs where they are known to be planning an event or activity. For example we recently wrote to Bath University Canoe Club regarding an event they held on the Teign.

Haytor Hoppa – Devon County Council

The Haytor Hoppa, which is funded by Dartmoor National Park Authority, Devon County Council, and Natural England, has operated successfully since 2009 to support and promote sustainable tourism. The seasonal bus service covers the eastern side of Dartmoor on a circular route (bus service no. 271) starting and finishing in Newton Abbot via Bovey Tracey and is perfect for exploring Dartmoor.

Stops en route include Haytor Information Centre – with easy access to Haytor Rocks, the beautiful village of Widecombe-in-the-Moor, Houndtor Rocks, Manaton village, Becky Falls visitor attraction and Yarnar Wood. Passenger figures for 2013 saw 2607 passengers with an occupancy rate of 79% (inc concessionary fares). Passenger figures have been consistent over the past few years with a small rise in 2013.

PROSPER

Prosperous Dartmoor

Skills Audit

A skills audit was undertaken as part of the *Moor than meets the eye* development project. It was commissioned to inform and devise a programme of training and skills development to support future management, conservation and interpretation of the heritage of the area. The project was undertaken by an independent consultant and focussed on the following sectors: farmers and land managers; volunteers; tourism businesses. There was very clear interest in learning more about the following subjects:

- traditional moorland skills
- understanding access
- habitats and species
- habitat management
- agri-environment schemes
- recording and interpreting heritage assets
- archaeology, historic farmsteads
- maintenance of historic buildings
- building vernacular
- history of farming
- Dartmoor breeds
- history of the commons

A skills and training programme including the above and called the Dartmoor Diploma has been included in the second round bid to the HLF for Moor than meets the eye, a Landscape Partnership scheme.

Sectors Research

Devon County Council, DNPA and Somerset County Council jointly commissioned research leading to a deeper understanding of economic sectors in the areas and those that have potential for generating high growth and productivity in the future. The aim being to understand which sectors should be encouraged in order to deliver accelerated growth in GVA and high value jobs.

Serio (Plymouth University) undertook the research and in 2013 published a [report](#)  for Dartmoor identifying three potential priority sectors; Business Services, Tourism, and Construction and Property. 'Sector Outlooks' contained in the report provide a snapshot of current features and trends in the shortlisted sectors, and based on desk research, national and local consultation, provide some indication of the interventions that could be shaped in more detail through further engagement with business.

This research enables a better understanding of potential priorities for growth of the Dartmoor economy, and forms the basis for some of the actions in the new National Park Management Plan

Boosting the Green Economy

The Moor Wool initiative phase 2 development is being used to develop, test and promote products from Dartmoor which help sustain local businesses and the environment. To enable this work to move forward “Resources for Change” has been contracted to carry out study into branding and opportunities on Dartmoor.

Carbon Capture – Environment Agency

Upstream thinking aims to increase the natural capacity of upland areas to hold water through the restoration of peat bogs. On Exmoor this has resulted in a third less water leaving the moorland during heavy rainfall compared with three years ago. Peatlands are also huge carbon stores and so restoration halts the oxidation that occurs when peat bogs are damaged and promotes active peat growth which increases the absorption of CO₂ from the atmosphere. The restoration of peatlands could play a major role in mitigating against atmospheric CO₂ rises. Provided by Environment Agency

Community Focus

Development Management and Delivery Plan (“the DMD”)

In July 2013 the Authority adopted the [Development Management and Delivery Plan](#) (‘the DMD’). This document was 3 years in preparation, which included around 30 community engagement events, nearly one thousand individual comments (or ‘representations’) on the plan, and examination by an independent Inspector. The DMD together with the Core Strategy is now the local plan for the National Park. It includes general policies covering topics like affordable housing, landscape, the historic environment, farm diversification, renewable energy, and economic development. These will be used in day to day decision making on planning applications. The DMD also includes site specific policies which include development sites like those already moving forward at Chagford and Ashburton. Allocating development sites in this way aims to provide certainty for communities and developers around where it is considered are the most appropriate sites for new development to take place. The two plans together look forward to 2026, but will be kept under regular review.

South West Devon Community Energy Partnership identifies that £400 million is spent on energy in South West Devon

[The South West Devon Community Energy Partnership](#) is a unique network bringing together community groups and local authority representatives from across West Devon, South Hams and Dartmoor National Park. We’re working towards a sustainable future for our energy.

Partnership members include Dartmoor National Park Authority, West Devon Borough, South Hams District, Teignbridge District and Devon County Council’s in partnership with community groups including Bovey Climate Action, DARE, Dartmoor Circle, Greener Teign, PL21 Ivybridge, Sustainable South Brent, Transition Tavistock and Transition Town Totnes.

The partnership evolved in response to needs identified by local strategic partnerships and has been supported through the SEACS project, match funded by Devon County Council and the EU Interreg IVa programme. The SWD CEP identified and addressed the need to establish a robust evidence base to focus future work and target the best opportunities to make a difference. Working with the University of Exeter an independent assessment of current energy consumption, opportunities for energy efficiency and renewable energy generation across the area has been published and presented to local councillors and officers from South Hams, West Devon, Devon County and Dartmoor National Park in June. The study is now being used by the SWD CEP to discuss the energy objectives for the area should be, what would be achievable, and what projects should be prioritised for maximum effect.

The study has provided some surprising results which have impacts for the South West Devon area and the future potential for energy resilience for all sectors. Current energy consumption is divided in, approximately, equal thirds between the transport, domestic and non-domestic sectors. This energy consumption results in approximately £0.4 billion being spent on energy in SW Devon – equivalent to about a fifth of the economic output of the area or about 15,000 full time jobs. Effectively each person is spending £2,600 each year on energy within this area.

The study highlighted that the greatest opportunities energy improvements in the domestic sector are from solid wall insulation, encouraging further behavioural changes and installing micro-generation renewables. Following this the Partnership submitted a successful bid to the Energy Saving Trust, match funded by the DSDF to work with at least 5 communities on energy efficiency, drive the take up of retrofit measures and to highlight any barriers to effective take up of home improvements.



Conclusion

This report was considered by the National park management Plan Delivery Board on Monday 24 February 2014. In considering this report the board were concerned that what the Management Plan reporting and this report in particular did not pick up on which fall outside the plan and might not get picked up. These issues could be a threat to achieving some of the desired outcomes in the management plan. It was agreed that this report would include a section called 'emerging Issues' to capture this information.

Emerging Issues

Changes to TB testing regulations

The eradication of TB from cattle in the UK is a priority for Government and farmers. Pre-movement testing has been in place since to try and control the disease however cattle moving from the farm to common land and back again have, until recently, benefitted from an exception to the regulations.

In late 2013 Defra consulted on the proposed removal of the derogation and farmers from Dartmoor engaged in the debate. After June 2014 the default situation will be that all cattle movements between common land and other parts of the farm will require pre-movement tests. In an attempt to mitigate the impact of these regulations Defra are offering to accept the annual herd test as a pre-movement test if that test has taken place within 60 days of the cattle moving onto the common. Also the Vets from Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) will have to undertake a risk assessment for each common and if the risk is deemed acceptable they may not require testing following the return of cattle from the common. The AHVLA now require a TB Control Plan for each common to help them undertake the risk assessment. These plans will have to be in place before the end of the summer. The Dartmoor Commoners' Council is piloting a plan for all common land on Dartmoor.

There is real concern amongst the cattle farmers that this level of restriction might lead to fewer cattle on the commons and for a shorter grazing period leading to more vegetation and less palatable feed for the remaining stock.

Note provided by John Waldon, Dartmoor Commoners' Council