



EXMOOR

NATIONAL PARK

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
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19 November 2020

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

To: All Members of the Exmoor National Park Authority

A meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority will be held via Microsoft Teams Video Conferencing software on **Tuesday 1 December 2020 at 10.00am.**

The meeting will be open to the press and public subject to the passing of any resolution under s.100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

There is Public Speaking at this meeting, when the Chairperson will allow members of the public two minutes each to ask questions, make statements, or present a petition relating to any item relevant to the business of the Authority or relating to any item on the Agenda. Anyone wishing to ask questions should notify the Corporate Support Officer as soon as possible, or at the latest by 4pm on the working day before the meeting of the agenda item on which they wish to speak, indicating a brief summary of the matter or matters to be raised (contact Judy Coles on 01398 322250 or email jcoles@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk).

Please be aware that this is a public Authority Meeting and will be **audio and video recorded**. We will make the recordings available via our website for members of the public to listen to and/or view, within 72 hours of the meeting taking place.

Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings at this meeting. Anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings may do so unless the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting or there is good reason not to do so. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chairperson so that those present may be made aware.

(The agenda and papers for this meeting can be downloaded from the National Park Authority's website www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk).

Sarah Bryan
Chief Executive

AGENDA

The first section of the meeting will be chaired by Mr R Milton, the Chairperson of the Authority. If the Chairperson is absent, the Deputy Chairperson shall preside.

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest/Lobbying of Members/Unaccompanied Site Visits

Members are asked to declare:-

- (1) any interests they may have in relation to items on the agenda for this meeting;
- (2) any lobbying by anyone concerned with a planning application and any unaccompanied site visits where contact has been made with any person concerned with a planning application.

(NB. When verbally making these declarations, members are also asked to complete the Disclosures at Meetings form – attached for members only).

3. Chairperson's Announcements

4. **Minutes** (1) To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 3 November 2020 (Item 4).

- (2) To consider any Matters Arising from those Minutes.

5. **Public Speaking:** The Chairperson will allow members of the public to ask questions, make statements, or present a petition. Questions of a general nature relevant to the business of the Authority can be asked under this agenda item. Any questions specific to an agenda item can be posed when that item is considered subject to the discretion of the person presiding at the meeting.

Agenda items relating to the Authority's role as sole local planning authority for the National Park area including determination of planning applications. This section of the meeting will be chaired by Mr S Pugsley (Deputy Chairperson (Planning)). If the Deputy Chairperson (Planning) is absent, the Deputy Chairperson of the Authority shall be preside.

6. **Appeal:** To note the decision of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to allow the Appeal and grant outline planning permission for the erection of a dwelling for racehorse trainer and associated works at East Harwood Stables, Harwood Lane, Timberscombe in accordance with the terms of the application ref. 6/34/18/101, subject to conditions.

7. **Development Management:** To consider the report of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development on the following:-

Agenda Item	Application No.	Description	Page Nos.
7.1	6/14/20/105	Application under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for the proposed repair and renovation of public toilet, together with the installation of car parking machine – Ashcombe Toilet, Simonsbath, Somerset, TA24 7SH	1 - 18
7.2	6/14/20/106	Application under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for advertisement consent for the proposed installation of visitor information board and 4 no. pay and display signs – Ashcombe Toilet, Simonsbath, Somerset, TA24 7SH	19 - 30

7.3	6/25/20/101	Proposed removal of 4 feed bins and erection of 4 new feed bins at alternative sites. Retrospective – Lillycombe Farm, Oare, Minehead	31 - 42
7.4	6/25/20/105	Resubmission of application ref 6/25/20/102 for the retention of helicopter pad (6m x 6m). Retrospective – Lillycombe Farm, Porlock, Minehead	43 - 64
7.5	62/49/20/003	Proposed change of use and conversion of former Methodist's chapel to 1 no. local needs dwelling and the construction of 1 no. local needs self-build dwelling, together with associated landscaping and hardstanding, and the extension of existing parking area – Mineswood, Heasley Mill, South Molton	65 - 90
7.6	6/42/20/107	Proposed erection of a general purpose agricultural building for storage of fodder, machinery and tools – Land to the East of Hawkridge Village	91 - 104
7.7	6/9/20/115	Retrospective planning application for the erection of feather edge fence and metal gate – Gardners 1, Amory Road, Dulverton, Somerset	105 - 111

- 8. Application Decisions Delegated to the Chief Executive:** To note the applications determined by the Chief Executive under delegated powers ([Item 8](#)).
- 9. Site Visits:** To arrange any site visits agreed by the Committee (the reserve date being Friday 8 January 2021 (am)).

The remaining section of the meeting will be chaired by Mr R Milton, Chairperson of the Authority. If the Chairperson is absent, the Deputy Chairperson of the Authority shall preside.

- 10. Progress Implementing the Corporate Plan 2020-2021:** To consider the report of the Head of Strategy and Performance ([Item 10](#))
- 11. Annual Estate Review 2019-2020:** To consider the report of the Land and Property Manager ([Item 11](#))
- 12. Rights of Way and Access Annual Report for 2019-2020:** To consider the report of the Head of Conservation and Access ([Item 12](#))
- 13. Authority Meetings Schedule for 2021 and 2022:** To consider the report of the Head of Strategy and Performance ([Item 13](#))
- 14. Personnel Update**

Leavers

- 08/12/2020 – Marilyn Sloane – Finance Officer – resignation
- 18/12/2020 – Sally Carter – Planning and Customer Support Assistant – voluntary redundancy

15. Any Other Business of Urgency

Further information on any of the reports can be obtained by contacting the National Park Authority at the address and telephone numbers at the top of the agenda. Details of the decisions taken at this meeting will be set out in the formal Minutes which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. In the meantime, details of the decisions can be obtained from Judy Coles, Corporate Support Officer, at Exmoor House.

ITEM 4

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority held on Tuesday, 3 November 2020 at 10.00am via Microsoft Teams Video Conferencing software.

PRESENT

Mr R Milton (Chairperson)	
Miss A V Davis (Deputy Chairperson)	
Mr S J Pugsley (Deputy Chairperson (Planning))	
Mrs L Blanchard	Mrs F Nicholson
Mr M Ellicott	Mr J Patrinos
Mr D Elson	Mr P Pilkington
Mr J Holtom	Mr B Revans
Mr J Hunt	Mrs E Stacey
Dr M Kelly	Mr N Thwaites
Mr M Kravis	Dr S Warren
Mrs C M Lawrence	Mr V White
Mr E Ley	

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R Edgell.

199. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

The following declarations were declared in relation to Item 7.1 – Application No. 6/34/19/104 - Proposed rural workers dwelling and garage and associated works - Knowle Farm, Knowle Lane, Timberscombe, Somerset:

- Mr J Holtom declared a pecuniary interest as a Director of Landsense Professional, which had provided advice to the Authority regarding this application and indicated he would leave the meeting when this item was considered.
- Mr P Pilkington declared a personal interest as Chairman of Timberscombe Parish Council and indicated he would leave the meeting when this item was considered.

The following declarations were declared in relation to Item 7.3 – Application No. GDO 20/06 - Prior approval for the proposed erection of agricultural building (31.99m x 13.72m) - West Dean Farm, Trentishoe, Devon:

- Mr D Elson declared a personal interest as land within his ownership borders the application site and indicated that he would leave the meeting when this item was considered.
- Dr M Kelly declared a pecuniary interest as he had acted as Agent for the Applicant and indicated he would leave the meeting when this item was considered.

In relation to Agenda Item 14 – Valley of Rocks ENPA Car Park Improvements: Mr J Patrinos declared a personal interest as a member of Lynton & Lynmouth Town Council.

200. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- During the recently announced national lockdown (5/11 to 2/12 inclusive), it is proposed that ENPA carparks and toilets will remain open, but all National Park Centres will close. Those staff who can work from home will continue to do so.

- The Authority is awaiting ratification from the Secretary of State regarding the appointment of a new Parish Member to the Authority
- A virtual meeting of the Exmoor Consultative & Parish Forum will be held on Thursday, 12 November at 10.30 am
- Defra has released its review of the way in which releases of common pheasant and red legged partridge on or near European protected sites in England are managed: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-gamebird-releases-on-and-around-european-protected-sites>
- As agreed by Members at the October meeting, the Authority has submitted its formal response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's consultation on proposals for reform of the planning system in England.

201. MINUTES

- Confirmation:** The **Minutes** of the Authority's meeting held on 6 October 2020 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
- Matters arising:** There were no matters arising.

202. PUBLIC SPEAKING: See Minutes 204, 207, 214 and 215 for details of public speakers.

Items relating to the Authority's role as sole local planning authority for the National Park area including determination of planning applications. This section of the meeting was chaired by Mr S J Pugsley, Deputy Chairperson (Planning).

APPEALS

203. The Committee noted the **decision** of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to allow the Appeal and grant planning permission for the first floor extension over existing living room to provide third bedroom at 2 Perry Cottages, Dulverton, Somerset in accordance with the terms of the application ref. 6/9/20/102, subject to conditions..

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Before the officer presentation Mr J Holtom and Mr P Pilkington left the meeting.

204. Application No. 6/34/19/104

Location: Knowle Farm, Knowle Lane, Timberscombe, Somerset

Proposal: Proposed rural workers dwelling and garage and associated works

The Authority considered the **report** of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.

Public Speaking:

(1) Mr T Lamacraft, Applicant

<p>RESOLVED: To grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in the report.</p>

After the vote, Mr H Holtom and Mr P Pilkington returned to the meeting.

Mr J Patrinos joined the meeting.

205. Application No. 6/9/20/114

Location: 30 Barns Close, Dulverton

Proposal: Proposed erection of summerhouse and associated decking

The Authority considered the **report** of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.

RESOLVED: To grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in the report.

Mr M Kravis did not vote on Agenda Item 7.2 above, as he was not present for the duration of the item.

The meeting closed for recess at 11.00am and reconvened at 11.10am

Before the officer presentation Mr D Elson and Dr M Kelly left the meeting.

206. Application No. GDO 20/06

Location: West Dean Farm, Trentishoe, Devon

Proposal: Prior approval for the proposed erection of agricultural building (31.99m x 13.72m)

The Authority considered the **report** of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.

RESOLVED: To grant prior approval subject to the conditions set out in the report.

Mr M Kravis did not vote on Agenda Item 7.3 above, as he was not present for the duration of the item.

After the vote, Mr D Elson and Dr M Kelly returned to the meeting.

207. Application No. 6/14/20/105

Location: Ashcombe Toilet, Simonsbath, Somerset

Proposal: Application under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for the proposed repair and renovation of public toilet, together with the installation of car parking machine

The Authority considered the **report** of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.

Public Speaking:

- (1) Mr W R Chapman, Local Resident – statement read out
- (2) Mr C Barle Moor, Local Resident

The Authority's Consideration

During the course of the Member debate, concerns were raised about the proposed inclusion of screening to the side of the toilet block, as it was considered this had the

potential to prevent clear site lines from the carparking area. It was noted that the accepted wisdom in relation to the design of public toilets was to ensure that clear site lines were present, in order to protect young and vulnerable people using such facilities from potential harm.

It was therefore proposed and agreed by a majority of Members that determination of the application should be deferred in order to obtain further information regarding the safety and security aspect of the screening element of the design.

RESOLVED: To defer determination of the application in order to obtain further information on the safety and security aspect of the screening element of the design.

208. ORDER OF BUSINESS: In relation to Agenda Item 7.5 - Application No. 6/14/20/106 – Application under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for advertisement consent for the proposed installation of visitor information board and 4 no. pay and display signs – Ashcombe Toilet, Simonsbath, Somerset, the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development put a recommendation before the Committee that, in light of the deferral of Application No. 6/14/20/105, it would be prudent to also defer determination of this Application, given that part of the scheme related to works to attach signage to the proposed screening.

Authority Members concurred with this recommendation and voted to defer the application.

209. APPLICATION DECISIONS DELEGATED TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: The Authority noted the [decisions of the Chief Executive determined under delegated powers](#).

210. SITE VISITS: There were no site visits to arrange.

The meeting closed for recess at 12.36pm and reconvened at 12.47pm.

The remaining section of the meeting was chaired by Mr R Milton, Chairman of the Authority.

211. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

The Authority received the [report](#) of the Head of Strategy and Performance.

The Authority's Consideration

Mrs F Nicholson raised a number of concerns regarding changes to the remit of the Standards Committee, and the proposed changes to the scheme of delegation with regard to planning and parish councils.

Reassurance was provided that there is no intention to change the powers of the Standards Committee and that any recommendations it might make would always be brought to the full Authority for consideration, as the formal decision-making body.

In relation to the changes to paragraphs 7(3)(i) and 7(4) of the scheme of delegation requiring that statutory consultees, including Parish Councils, provide planning reasons in the event they reach a view contrary to the recommendation of planning officers, this was seen purely as a tidying up exercise, as this requirement had always been in place. However, the Committee recognised that the Authority would need to provide additional support in this regard and therefore requested that Recommendation 2 be amended to

reflect that a training and advisory programme would be developed and delivered to Parish and Town Councils. It was also clarified that paragraph 2.5 of the covering report should have read 'where the statutory consultee, including Parish Councils, has a contrary view to officers'.

Members also requested that Officers clarify the wording in paragraphs 3.2 (7) and 3.3 (4) of the Scheme of Delegation to Standards Committee regarding oversight of general complaints received by the Authority (for example regarding rights of way or planning), not just complaints against Members.

RESOLVED: The Authority resolved to:-

- (1) Approve and adopt the proposed amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to Committees in paragraph 2.4 of the report, subject to clarifying the wording in paragraphs 3.2 (7) and 3.3 (4) regarding oversight of general complaints received by the Authority.
- (2) Approve and adopt the proposed amendments to Standing Orders and the Scheme of Delegation in Appendix 1 to the report, subject to a training and advisory programme being delivered to Parish and Town Councils.
- (3) Approve the proposed work programme for the Standards Committee in paragraph 3.1 of the report.

Mrs C Lawrence did not vote on Agenda Item 10 above, as she was not present for the duration of the item.

The meeting closed for recess at 1.45pm and reconvened at 2.15pm.

212. REVISED BUDGET FOR 2020/21

The Authority received the [report](#) of the Chief Finance Officer.

The Authority's Consideration

The meeting noted a minor error in paragraph 4.3 on page 3 of the report, where the date should have read 31 March 2021. Members wished to place on record their appreciation for the work carried out by the Chief Finance Officer and his team during very difficult circumstances given the current pandemic.

RESOLVED: The Authority resolved to:-

- (1) Approve the revised Core Budget for 2020/21 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- (2) Note the position regarding reserves as set out in Appendix 3 to the report and the projected balance on the General Fund at 31 March 2021 of £300,000 and approve the changes to reserves set out in section 5.
- (3) Authorise the Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer to make such adjustments as are necessary to keep within the overall budget and with the objective of transferring underspends that arise to reserves.

213. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REPORT

The Authority received the **report** of the Chief Finance Officer.

RESOLVED: To note the Treasury Management Outturn for the first six months of the 2020-21 financial year.

Mr M Kravis did not vote on Agenda Item 13 above, as he was not present for the duration of the item.

214. EXMOOR NATURE RECOVERY VISION

The Authority received the **report** of the Head of Conservation and Access and the Wildlife Conservation Officer.

Public Speaking:

- (1) Mrs R Thomas, The Exmoor Society

The Authority's Consideration

Members were appreciative of the work that the Nature Conservation Advisory Panel had put into developing the Exmoor Nature Recovery Vision and recognised its importance in terms of tackling the joint nature and climate emergency that we all now face.

Concerns were raised about the engagement with the farming community, particularly given the uncertainty that surrounds agricultural payment schemes post-Brexit and what impact the Covid-19 pandemic might have on the funding available for new Environmental Land Management schemes and also the wider economy.

However, the Committee accepted that the Vision was not a delivery strategy, but instead represented a starting point from which to move forward. Further detailed work would need to be undertaken to identify potential delivery mechanisms and the Authority were keen to work alongside farmers, land managers, conservationists, communities and public bodies to explore how we can support nature recovery together.

RESOLVED: The Authority resolved to:-

- (1) Adopt the Vision document which outlines how Exmoor can respond to the current joint nature and climate emergencies.
- (2) Agree to delegate responsibility to make any changes to the draft Vision to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, taking on board Member comments.

215. VALLEY OF ROCKS ENPA CAR PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The Authority received the **report** of the Head of Conservation and Access

Public Speaking:

- (1) Mrs R Thomas, The Exmoor Society

RESOLVED: The Authority resolved to:-

- (1) Authorise an overall scheme of improvement works to the existing car parking and public open space facilities (this scheme will also be dependent on a subsequent planning application).
- (2) Approve the release of £80,000 from the unallocated balance within the Estates Reserve to facilitate the implementation of improvement works.

216. PERSONNEL UPDATE: The Authority noted the recent staff changes as set out on the agenda.

217. ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF URGENCY: There was none

The meeting closed at 2.34pm

(Chairperson)



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 October 2020

by Colin Cresswell BSc (Hons) MA MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F9498/W/19/3220361

East Harwood Stables, Harwood Lane, Timberscombe TA24 7UE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Alan Jones against the decision of Exmoor National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref 6/34/18/101, dated 19 January 2018, was refused by notice dated 24 July 2018.
 - The development proposed is described as 'erection of a dwelling for racehorse trainer and associated works'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and outline planning permission is granted for a development described as 'erection of a dwelling for racehorse trainer and associated works' at East Harwood Stables, Harwood Lane, Timberscombe TA24 7UE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 6/34/18/101, dated 19 January 2018, subject to the conditions set out in the Schedule at the end of this Decision.

Procedural Matters

2. The application was made in outline with all matters, except access, reserved for future determination. I have considered the appeal on that basis.
3. The Council has indicated that it wishes to withdraw the first reason for refusal listed on the Decision Notice (concerning the financial viability of the business). I have therefore determined the appeal solely on the basis of the second reason for refusal, which concerns the effect on the landscape.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal concerns a racehorse training business which is situated on a hillside in the open countryside. Apart from the two-storey barn and manège, there is little development within the confines of the site or in the immediate surroundings, which mostly comprise open fields. This is representative of the wider landscape, which is distinctly rural in nature and is mainly dominated by agricultural land, hedgerows and mature trees.

6. I am conscious that there are very few buildings at this elevation elsewhere in the local landscape and that the addition of a new dwelling alongside the existing barn would represent something of an anomaly. Furthermore, due to the elevation and openness of the site, the proposed dwelling would be visible in long distance views from within the surrounding countryside. Indeed, from some perspectives the development would be seen in the foreground of Dunkery Beacon and the associated moorland to the west.
7. However, the local topography and the presence of dense tree cover at the bottom of the hillside means that the dwelling would only be seen in the context of the surrounding countryside from some distance away. From these remote vantage points, the dwelling would be perceived as a relatively small and inconspicuous feature within the wider landscape. Although the dwelling would be physically separated from the main barn, this would not make the development appear unduly prominent. Sensitive design and potential use of landscaping may further reduce any visual impact.
8. From closer quarters, the dwelling would only come into full view when approaching the site at the very end of Harwood Lane. While there is a public right of way running behind the existing barn, the dwelling would not be easy to see from here due to the presence of a tall hedgerow.
9. I note that the Council has suggested positioning the dwelling closer to the existing barn to help consolidate built development on the site. However, for the reasons given above, the dwelling would have an acceptable impact on the landscape in the location currently being proposed. The potential for cumulative landscape harm would be a matter for consideration were similar proposals to be advanced elsewhere in this area in the future.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. There would be no conflict with Policies CE-S1 or CE-D1 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan which aim to protect landscape and scenic quality. There would also be no conflict with Policy HC-D8 of the plan which refers to rural workers dwellings in the countryside and, amongst other things, aims to ensure that such dwellings are well related to other buildings on the holding. In reaching this decision, I have borne in mind Paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework which says that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks.

Conclusion and Conditions

11. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be allowed.
12. I have imposed the standard requirement for further details to be approved before development takes place, together with standard time limit conditions. To protect the character and appearance of the area there are conditions withdrawing permitted development rights for external lighting and extensions (which is also a requirement of Policy HC-D8). For similar reasons there is a condition requiring cables to be laid underground.
13. As the dwelling would be built as an exception to policies which restrict new housing development in the open countryside, a condition has been imposed which requires it to be occupied by a rural worker. Likewise, there is a condition to prevent the barn being used for residential purposes.

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14. A condition has also been imposed requiring parking and turning space to be provided prior to the occupation of the dwelling. I note the appellant's comments on this matter, but the condition is imposed to ensure the safe movement of vehicles in and out of the site rather than to specify the number of parking spaces that should be provided.

Colin Cresswell

INSPECTOR

(Schedule of conditions attached)

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) Details of the appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before any development takes place and the development shall be carried out as approved.
- 2) Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.
- 3) The development hereby permitted shall take place not later than 2 years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.
- 4) The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be occupied until space has been laid out within the site for the parking and turning of vehicles. The details for parking and turning shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and once approved the works shall take place before occupation and thereafter be maintained for their designated purpose.
- 5) The occupation of the dwelling hereby approved shall be limited to a person or persons solely or mainly working, or last working, in the locality in agriculture (as defined in Section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990), or to a person or persons solely or mainly working, or last working in equestrian business based at the stables adjacent to the application site and shown in the blue outline on the plans submitted in support of the application.
- 6) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no extensions to the dwelling hereby permitted shall be erected without the prior permission, in writing, of the Local Planning Authority.
- 7) Any gas, electricity, water, sewage, telephone and cabling services to the building shall be placed underground.
- 8) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting those Orders with or without modification), no external lighting shall be installed on the residential unit hereby approved unless details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 9) The use of the existing stable building for residential accommodation shall cease prior to the substantial completion or first occupation, whichever is the sooner, of the dwelling hereby approved.

7.1



Committee Report

Application Number:	6/14/20/105
Registration Date:	23-Sep-2020
Determination Date:	11-Nov-2020
Applicant	Exmoor National Park Authority
Agent:	
Case Officer:	Kieran Reeves
Site Address:	Ashcombe Toilet, Simonsbath, Somerset, TA24 7SH
Proposal:	Application under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for the proposed repair and renovation of public toilet, together with the installation of car parking machine.
Recommendation:	Approve with conditions
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	The application has been submitted by Exmoor National Park Authority in relation to land owned by the National Park Authority.

Relevant History

6/14/89/114 – Proposed extension to car park – Approved on 6th February 1990

6/14/85/101 – Proposed conversion of cowshed to public convenience and information display area – Approved on 5th March 1985

6/14/78/001 – Proposed erection of mobile public convenience and car parking for fifteen cars – Approved on 7th March 1978

Site Description & Proposal

This application came before Members at the November Committee meeting on 3rd November 2020. The application was deferred following concerns over safeguarding issues that may be caused by the timber screen that did form part of the proposed development. Officers can confirm that the screen has been omitted from the scheme and the remaining parts of the proposal are as they were presented to Members at the November Committee meeting.

Planning permission is sought for the renovation and repair of the public toilets building at Ashcombe and the installation of a pay and display machine to charge vehicles parking in the car park. Ashcombe consists of a public car park and a public toilets building. The site is situated on the northern edge of Simonsbath and is

7.1

accessed via a single width access that also serve a number of residential properties. Whiterock Cottage adjoins the western side of the site and this is a community building that was subject to an application by the Authority in 2019 to carry out works involving partial demolition (reference 6/14/19/102).

The works to the public toilets building includes re-roofing the building, replacing windows and doors with new timber units, replacing timber cladding in the gables with new timber cladding, replacing rainwater goods, replacing non-conservation, non-flush fitting rooflights with conservation flush fitting rooflights, re-location of a bat dormer and the removal of a steel lean-to structure from the rear of the building.

The pay and display machine would be approximately 1.66 metres tall. It would be installed in the area adjacent to the toilets that is enclosed by low walls on two sides and a high wall on one side. A new path would be formed to the machine. Signage for the machine is also proposed and this is considered under application reference 6/14/20/106.

Consultee Representations

Exmoor Parish Council – Support the application but state the following:

1. Clear signage to the car park will be hugely important as the existing signs are not adequate. It will be especially important for there to be indicators when the Car Park is Full or Closed to prevent further traffic from entering a limited space.
2. The council has concerns about overspill parking and hope that ideas of a second parking area will be considered. They hope that it doesn't push more people to park outside of the car park (i.e on the bend by Pound Cottage and the Hotel or even on the roads).
3. There are concerns about the design of the machine not being in keeping with the beautiful surrounding area. Perhaps clad or encase the parts that don't need daily access? There is a feeling that it would be a shame to ruin the very natural feel down there.
4. The parish council are really pleased that the Toilet Block is going to be upgraded and made fit for purpose. People will be using the toilets and car park in the evenings if they are in the Old School for a function and so a few sensorised outside lights would be a good thing to illuminate the toilets, car park and Old School to avoid injuries in the dark.

SCC Highway Authority – No observations

ENPA Wildlife Officer – Ashcombe Toilets and Stores was originally surveyed by Helix Ecology in 2014. Helix Ecology undertook update surveys, comprising a re-assessment of bat roost and nesting bird potential (9 June 2020) and two dusk emergence surveys (9 June and 17 July 2020). The results of the surveys were as follows:

7.1

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- Bats: The building is now used by the lesser horseshoe maternity colony that formerly inhabited Whiterock Cottage. Bat numbers have increased over those reported for Whiterock Cottage, although this may reflect easier survey conditions. Earlier surveys confirm the presence of three other roosts in Ashcombe Store used by this species: day roost outside the breeding season, feeding perch and night roost. The building is also used as three day-roosts for small numbers of brown long-eared bats (which use roof crevices and the roof void) and common pipistrelle bats (roof crevices).
 - Birds: There are limited features (wall cavities) with nesting potential on the exterior of the building, but no evidence of nesting was found. A barn owl was recorded roosting in Whiterock Cottage (under the covered scaffold) during works.

Recommendations

To comply with local and national policy, wildlife legislation, and the requirements of the mitigation hierarchy and for biodiversity net gain, please attach the following conditions to the planning permission if granted.

Bats

As bat roosts will be affected, and a lesser horseshoe, brown long-eared bats and common pipistrelle potentially harmed, the following is required to be conditioned in order that ENPA fulfils its legal duty of 'strict protection' of European protected species under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations 2017 (and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

- Works to the toilet block shall not in any circumstances commence unless the Local Planning Authority has been provided with a copy of the modified licence for Whiterock Cottage (2015-8698-EPS-MIT-4), which includes Ashcombe Toilet & Stores as a compensation site for the loss of the original maternity roost in Whiterock Cottage, incorporating the proposed plans and mitigation measures.

Reason: A pre-commencement condition in the interests of the strict protection of European protected species and in accordance with ENPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure.

The following condition is also required to ensure that the LPA fulfils its legal duty of strict protection of European protected species

- Mitigation and compensation measure will follow those outlined within the Ashcombe Toilets and Store Bat and Bird survey report (Helix ecology, 2020), including:

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- 1) Appropriate timing of works to avoid the maternity period of May to August.
 - 2) Exclusion of the bat room ahead of works
 - 3) Relocation (or removal) of the existing bat dormer to prevent warm air being vented from the roost
 - 4) Modification of bat room window flight-access to increase security and reduce draught ingress
 - 5) Use of traditional bituminous type 1F slaters felt throughout
 - 6) Re-instate crevice roost features via ridge tiles and bat slates, and create access to north gable wall-top
 - 7) Created access to the roof void via slits in felt under a ridge tile and bat slate, and over the north gable wall

Reason: A pre-commencement condition in the interests of the Favourable Conservation Status of populations of European protected species and in accordance with ENPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure.

Bats and lighting

Due to the presence of foraging and commuting habitats for bats, there will be no artificial lighting of the trees or boundary vegetation. If external lighting is proposed, please attach the following condition:

- Prior to occupation, a “lighting design for bats”, following Guidance note 8 - bats and artificial lighting (ILP and BCT 2018), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The design shall show how and where external lighting will be installed (including through the provision of technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent bats using their territory or having access to their resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the design, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the design. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of the ‘Favourable Conservation Status’ of populations of European protected species and in accordance with ENPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure.

Birds

Due to the opportunistic nature of some passerine bird species please attach the following informative:

- The developers and their contractors are reminded of the legal protection afforded to nesting birds under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as

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amended). In the unlikely event that nesting birds are encountered during implementation of this permission it is recommended that works stop until the young have fledged or then advice is sought from a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity.

Biodiversity Enhancement (Net Gain)

As an enhancement measure, and in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), please apply the following conditions to any planning permission granted.

- The following will be integrated into the design of the buildings and site plans:
 - a) Installation of 1 x barn owl box on a tree in the vicinity of Whiterock Cottage. See the Barn Owl Trust's website for details of suitable designs (<http://www.barnowltrust.org.uk>).
 - b) Offset fascia boards by 15-20 mm to create suitable bat roost crevices between the fascia and the stone walls

Photographs of the installed features will be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation.

Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework

Provided the above conditions are applied as worded, I have no objection to this application.

Representations

Seven public representations have been received in relation to this application.

No objections are raised in relation to the proposed works to the Ashcombe toilets building but all representations received object to the proposed pay and display machine.

The reasons for objecting are the principle of charging to park at Ashcombe with the commercial justification being flawed, the impact on the character and appearance of the site with the introduction of a machine in an area that is free of such development, and the negative impact on the experience of Ashcombe resulting from having to pay for parking. Questions have also been raised about enforcing against unpaid tickets.

An online petition against the installation of the pay and display machine to charge for parking at Ashcombe car park has been created and at the time of writing this report there are 728 signatures.

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Policy Context

Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031

GP1 – General Policy: Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development

CE-S1 – Landscape and Seascape Character

CE-D1 – Protecting Exmoor’s Landscapes and Seascapes

CE-S2 – Protecting Exmoor’s Dark Night Sky

CE-S3 – Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

CE-S6 – Design and Sustainable Construction Principles

CC-S1 – Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

AC-D2 – Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development

AC-S3 – Traffic Management and Parking

AC-D3 – Parking Provision and Standards

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material planning consideration.

Planning Considerations

The main material planning considerations in this case are the principle of development, the design, scale and materials, and the impact on the landscape, wildlife, neighbouring amenity and highway safety.

Principle of Development

The application proposal consists of two parts – the renovation and repair of the public toilet building at Ashcombe and the introduction of a pay and display machine to start the charging of vehicles parking in the public car part at Ashcombe.

The proposal to renovate and repair the public toilet building would see the use and internal layout of the building remain as it currently is. The external works would be limited to replacing existing materials and features on the building. As such, these proposed works are considered to be compliant in principle with the Local Plan, subject to other material planning considerations being satisfied.

Officers note that there are objections to the principle of charging for parking in the car park at Ashcombe. These concerns are acknowledged but it is not the role of the planning system to consider whether charging for parking in car parks, or any service, is acceptable or not. The principle of charging is not a material planning consideration as the site would still remain in its current land use as a car park whether charging took place or not.

Officers also cannot consider whether the proposed machine would make a profit or not as this is a business decision for Exmoor National Park Authority, not a planning decision.

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Whether or not the Authority would enforce on unpaid tickets and how much a ticket would cost are also not planning matters.

Comments have also been made by members of the public that the installation of the pay and display machine would have a negative impact on the experience of visiting Ashcombe. Officers acknowledge that the need to pay at the site will impact on some people's enjoyment of the site but as with the above comments relating to the principle of charging, this is not a matter for the Local Planning Authority to have a decision over as the determination of this application is limited to typical material planning considerations.

As mentioned above, the use of the site as a public car park would remain as such after the proposed pay and display machine is installed. Given that it would have a directly ancillary and associated role to the use of the site as a car park, it is considered that the siting of such infrastructure within the car park would be acceptable in principle, subject to material planning considerations being satisfied.

Design, Scale and Materials

The proposed works to the public toilets building would not see an increase in the massing and bulk of the building and its current overall form would be retained. The works are to essentially replace existing materials and features on the building. The re-roofing works, replacement windows and doors, replacement timber cladding and replacement rainwater goods would all see the use of traditional materials that reflect and are sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building. The replacement rooflights would be an enhancement as conservation flush fitting rooflights would replace non-conservation rooflights that are not flush fitting. The removal of the lean-to structure attached to the rear of the building would also be of benefit to the character and appearance of the building. Overall, the proposed works to the public toilets building would be acceptable and policy compliant.

The proposed pay and display machine is a standard design and size for such a form of development and the materials that would be used in its construction are typical. It is difficult to install a machine which is of a "conservation style" as they are designed and built with practicality and functionality in mind. The Parish Council have supported the application but have suggested cladding the machine, but this is likely to impact on its functionality. The fact that the machine is designed with function over form is accepted, particularly in a car park setting, but the impact of this part of the proposed development on the landscape and visual amenity needs to be considered carefully.

Impact on Landscape

The works to the building would see the use of traditional materials that either match existing materials on the building or are an improvement, such as the replacement rooflights. As such, Officers consider that these proposed works would not cause material harm to the character and appearance of the landscape or visual amenity. The removal of the steel lean-to would benefit the landscape and visual amenity.

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As set out above, the impact of the pay and display machine on the landscape and visual amenity of the site needs to be considered carefully as it does constitute a non-traditional form of development.

The machine was originally proposed in an open area between the car park and Whiterock Cottage. Officers raised concerns with this proposed siting as it was considered that it would be overtly noticeable due to it being sited away from any existing built form and it would compromise some key views towards Ashcombe Gardens and Whiterock Cottage from the car park.

The machine is now proposed in an area adjacent to the public toilets. The area is enclosed by the toilets building on one side, a high wall on one side and low walls on two sides. The high wall would form the backdrop of the machine when viewed from the public realm and it would screen it from Whiterock Cottages site to the west, thereby sufficiently conserving the setting of this building within the landscape. The benefit of providing this backdrop is that its stone face offers a dark tonal finish that would help the machine to assimilate with its surroundings much better than if it was erected in an open area of the car park. When accepting that such a machine would be seen in a car park and that there will be some form of landscape and visual impact from the proposed development, its siting in the visual context of existing built form and away from the open views over the landscape of Ashcombe prevents it from being an isolated form of development in what is a relatively undeveloped site. It also means that its impact on the landscape and visual amenity is reduced to a considerably lower level than the originally proposed site.

The comments regarding landscape harm that have been made by members of the public are noted but Officers conclude that this new siting for the machine creates a more acceptable scheme that is considered on balance to not cause a level of material harm to the character and appearance of the landscape or visual amenity that would warrant refusal of planning permission.

The path to the machine is not considered to cause material harm to the landscape or visual amenity as it would be largely screened from wider viewpoints by the walls around the area. In addition, it would be seen in the context of the existing stone paths that lead to the public toilets building. Subject to a condition requiring details/samples of the path surface to be agreed with Officers, the installation of the path is considered to be acceptable from a landscape perspective.

The application site is within the 1km Buffer Zone of the Exmoor Dark Sky Reserve's Core Area. Policy CE-S2 of the Local Plan states that *development proposals should seek to reduce light spillage and eliminate all unnecessary forms of artificial outdoor lighting in the National Park by ensuring that external lighting within the Dark Sky Reserve Critical Buffer Zone is strictly controlled*. The machine is relatively small scale and the illuminated parts are limited to a small screen and other small illuminating parts. No external lighting is proposed on the machine or around it. Officers consider that the illuminating parts of the machine would not be sufficiently

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bright to be noticeable in the wider landscape or cause harmful light spill. Subject to the attachment of a condition removing permitted development rights to install lighting on or around the machine and the toilets building, the proposed machine is not considered to cause material harm to the Exmoor Dark Sky Reserve.

Impact on Wildlife

Ecological surveys have been carried out in June and July 2020 by Helix Ecology, including assessment of bat roosts and nesting bird potential and two dusk emergence surveys.

The survey report confirms that the toilets building is used by the lesser horseshoe maternity colony that formerly inhabited Whiterock Cottage. Bat numbers have increased over those reported for Whiterock Cottage, although this may reflect easier survey conditions. Earlier surveys confirm the presence of three other roosts in the building used by this species: day roost outside the breeding season, feeding perch and night roost. The building is also used as three day-roosts for small numbers of brown long-eared bats (which use roof crevices and the roof void) and common pipistrelle bats (roof crevices).

In terms of nesting birds, the survey report confirms that there are limited features (wall cavities) with nesting potential on the exterior of the building, but no evidence of nesting was found. A barn owl was recorded roosting in Whiterock Cottage (under the covered scaffold) during works.

The Authority's Wildlife Officer has considered the findings in the report and it has been advised that as bat roosts will be affected, and a lesser horseshoe, brown long-eared bats and common pipistrelle potentially harmed, a condition requiring a copy of a bat licence is submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to works commencing on the building is needed to ensure that the Local Planning Authority fulfils its legal duty of 'strict protection' of European protected species under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations 2017.

It is also recommended that a condition is attached that requires the works to the building to be carried out in accordance with certain mitigation and compensation measures, and a condition is also needed to seek prior approval of any external lighting scheme.

In terms of nesting birds, the Wildlife Officer has advised that due to the opportunistic nature of some passerine bird species, an informative is attached that draws the applicant's attention to the legal protection afforded to nesting birds.

Lastly, the Wildlife Officer has recommended that a condition is attached requiring ecological enhancement measures to be carried out as part of the proposed development. This is in line with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in Paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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Officers consider that with the attachment of the recommended conditions and informative, the proposed development would not cause material harm to wildlife interests on site and it therefore complies with Policy CE-S3 of the Local Plan and Paragraph 170 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

The nearest residential property to the application site is Ashcombe Cottage. The public toilets are situated approximately 33 metres from this neighbouring dwelling and the pay and display machine would be situated approximately 52 metres away.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the proposed works to the public toilets buildings would not involve increasing the massing and bulk of the building and its current overall form would be retained. In addition, the proposal does not include any new windows within the building. Having regards to these factors and taking into account the distance from the neighbouring property, it is considered that these works would not cause material harm to neighbouring amenity as a result of overbearing, loss of light or overlooking.

The pay and display machine would be relatively small scale when compared with the toilets building that it would be erected near to. The building would also act as a screen between the site of the machine and the neighbouring properties to the south east. It is also considered that the noise from the machine would be negligible and when having regards to the distance from neighbouring properties, it is judged that it would not cause a noise disturbance. Officers conclude that the proposed pay and display machine would not cause material harm to neighbouring amenity as a result of overbearing, loss of light or noise.

Impact on Highway Safety

The proposed development would not reduce the total number of parking spaces in the car park and it would not obstruct views when entering or leaving the site, or when egressing on to the public highway. As such, the proposed development is not considered to cause material to highway safety.

Comments have been made about people potentially parking on the public road rather than within the car park in order to avoid being charged for parking. The pay and display machine would not be installed to actively discourage or prevent people from parking within the car park, thereby forcing people to park on the road. As such, people deciding to park on the road would be a matter outside the control of the Local Planning Authority and would be an individual's choice.

Other Matters

In May 2019 the UK government declared a climate emergency, Exmoor National Park followed this by declaring a Climate Emergency in October 2019. To help meet this challenge the Local plan includes policies which seek to influence, contribute and challenge development to help meet the Climate Emergency.

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Policy GP1 of the Local Plan sets out that the need to consider future generations, through sustainability and resilience to climate change and adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Policy CC-S1 states that climate change mitigation will be encouraged, development which reduces demand for energy, using small scale low carbon and renewable energy, looks to situate development which avoids sites that would put wildlife at risk together with measures which avoids the risk of flooding. Policy CC-S5 seeks to support small scale renewable energy schemes that assist in contributing towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and moving towards a carbon neutral National Park and Policy CE-S6 seeks to incorporate sustainable construction methods which future proof against climate change impacts, including flood risk.

Paragraph 148 of the National Planning Policy Framework prescribes that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

There would be an impact on the climate from the works to the toilets building and the sourcing of construction materials but it is noted that the works would utilise sustainable construction materials. It is considered that there would not be a material impact on the climate from these works going forward as the building would remain in its current use. Again, there would be a climate impact associated with constructing and installing the machine and there would be a need for electricity for it to function, but its small scale means that the overall climate impact would not be significant. Officers consider that the impact on the climate resulting from the proposed development would not be such that the application should be refused.

Human Rights

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

Conclusion

The report sets out that the refurbishment and repair works to the Ashcombe toilets building are acceptable and policy compliant, particularly as sustainable construction materials would be used in the works.

There have been concerns and objections raised by members of the public in relation to the installation of the pay and display machine. Most of the comments made relate to the principle of charging for car parking at Ashcombe. These concerns are noted and understood by Officers but this is not a planning matter and is essentially a decision for the Park Authority as a whole, not the planning department.

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The machine itself is designed with function over form but its position within a car park is considered to be acceptable and the re-siting of it next to the toilets building is considered on balance to not cause a material impact on the landscape or visual amenity that would warrant refusal on these grounds.

Overall, Officers conclude that the proposed development is on balance acceptable and it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the attachment of appropriate planning conditions.

Recommendation

Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved Location Plan and Parking Machine Plan, date stamped by the Local Planning Authority on 23rd September 2020, approved drawing number DWG/WR003, date stamped by the Local Planning Authority on 9th October 2020, and approved drawing numbers DWH/WRC004A and DWG/WRC006, date stamped by the Local Planning Authority on 5th November 2020, unless otherwise required by condition(s) below.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of amenity.

3. Works to the toilet block shall not in any circumstances commence unless the Local Planning Authority has been provided with a copy of the modified licence for Whiterock Cottage (2015-8698-EPS-MIT-4), which includes Ashcombe Toilet & Stores as a compensation site for the loss of the original maternity roost in Whiterock Cottage, incorporating the proposed plans and mitigation measures.

Reason: In the interests of the strict protection of European protected species and in accordance with ENPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 (Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure).

4. The hereby approved works to the Ashcombe toilets building shall be carried out in accordance with the mitigation and compensation measures outlined

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within the Ashcombe Toilets and Store Bat and Bird survey report (Helix ecology, 2020), including:

- 1) Appropriate timing of works to avoid the maternity period of May to August;
- 2) Exclusion of the bat room ahead of works;
- 3) Relocation (or removal) of the existing bat dormer to prevent warm air being vented from the roost;
- 4) Modification of bat room window flight-access to increase security and reduce draught ingress;
- 5) Use of traditional bituminous type 1F slaters felt throughout;
- 6) Re-instatement of crevice roost features via ridge tiles and bat slates, and create access to north gable wall-top; and
- 7) Creation of access to the roof void via slits in felt under a ridge tile and bat slate, and over the north gable wall.

Reason: In the interests of the Favourable Conservation Status of populations of European protected species and in accordance with ENPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 (Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure).

5. Prior to installation, details/samples of the surface for the path hereby approved as part of this planning application shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The surface of the approved path shall only be constructed in accordance with the approved details/samples and it shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development and to conserve the character and appearance of the National Park landscape.

6. The hereby approved re-roofing works to the Ashcombe toilets building shall only be carried out re-using the existing natural slate roof tiles, or where this is not possible, new natural slate roof tiles that match the existing roof tiles in respect of size, shape, colour and texture. The roof of the building shall then be retained as such thereafter and any subsequent works to the roof shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of this condition.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development and to conserve the character and appearance of the building.

7. Any replacement windows and doors installed in the application building as part of this planning permission hereby granted shall only be constructed from natural timber. The application building shall be retained with natural timber windows and doors thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development and to conserve the character and appearance of the building.

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8. The hereby approved replacement rooflights in the application building shall only be of conservation design and they shall be fitted so that their outer face is flush with the outer face of the surrounding roof tiles. The replacement rooflights shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development and to conserve the character and appearance of the building.

9. The hereby approved replacement cladding in the gable of the application building shall only be constructed from natural timber and the application building shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development and to conserve the character and appearance of the building.

10. Any replacement rainwater goods installed on the application building as part of this planning permission hereby granted shall only be constructed from black coloured metal. The application building shall be retained with black metal rainwater goods thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development and to conserve the character and appearance of the building.

11. Prior to first use of the pay and display machine hereby approved, the following ecological enhancement measures shall be carried out, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority:

- a) Install 1 no. barn owl box on a tree; and
- b) Offset the timber gable cladding by 15-20 mm to create suitable bat roost crevices.

Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in Paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework

12. Prior to the installation of any external lighting on or around the Ashcombe toilets building or the pay and display machine, a "Lighting Design for Bats", following Guidance Note 8 - Bats and Artificial Lighting (ILP and BCT 2018), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The design shall show how and where external lighting will be installed (including through the provision of technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent bats using their territory or having access to their resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the design, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the

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design. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the 'Favourable Conservation Status' of populations of European protected species and in accordance with ENPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 (Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure), and in the interests of visual amenity and the protection of Exmoor's dark night sky.

13. In the event that the use of the hereby approved pay and display machine ceases, the machine shall be removed from the site within six months of the cessation of charging for parking of vehicles.

Reason: To ensure the removal of a redundant structure in the interests of the conserving the character and appearance of the landscape and the visual amenity of the area.

Informatives

Positive and Proactive Statement

This Authority has a pro-active approach to the delivery of development. Early pre-application engagement is always encouraged. In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, in determining this application, Exmoor National Park Authority has endeavoured to work positively and proactively with the agent/applicant, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, to ensure that all relevant planning considerations have been appropriately addressed to achieve a positive outcome.

Monitoring of Development

The applicant/developer is reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that the requirements of each planning condition are met and that the works are undertaken in accordance with the approved plans. Any failure to meet the terms of a planning condition or work which does not accord with the approved plans leaves the applicant/developer liable to formal action being taken. The National Park Authority endeavours to monitor on site the compliance with conditions and building works. This has benefits for applicants and developers as well as the National Park. To assist with this monitoring of development the applicant/developer is requested to give at least fourteen days notice of the commencement of development to ensure that effective monitoring can be undertaken. The Planning Section can be contacted at Exmoor National Park Authority, Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9HL or by telephone on 01398 323665 or by email plan@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk.

Conditions and Informatives and the Submission of Further Details

Please check all the conditions and informatives attached to this Decision Notice. If there are any conditions which require submission of details and/or samples prior to work commencing on site it is vital that these are submitted and agreed in writing by

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the Local Planning Authority before work starts. Given the High Court's interpretation of the Planning Acts and their lawful implementation it is unlikely that the Local Planning Authority will be able to agree to a sample/details after the commencement of works if that sample/details should have been approved prior to commencement. If a sample/detail is not agreed as required prior to commencement and works have started then it is likely that this matter may only be able to be rectified by the submission of another application. To avoid delay, inconvenience and the need to submit a further application, please ensure that all appropriate details/samples are submitted and agreed at the specified time.

Please also note that due to other decisions of the High Court it is now not normally possible for the Local Planning Authority to agree to minor amendments to approved applications on an informal basis.

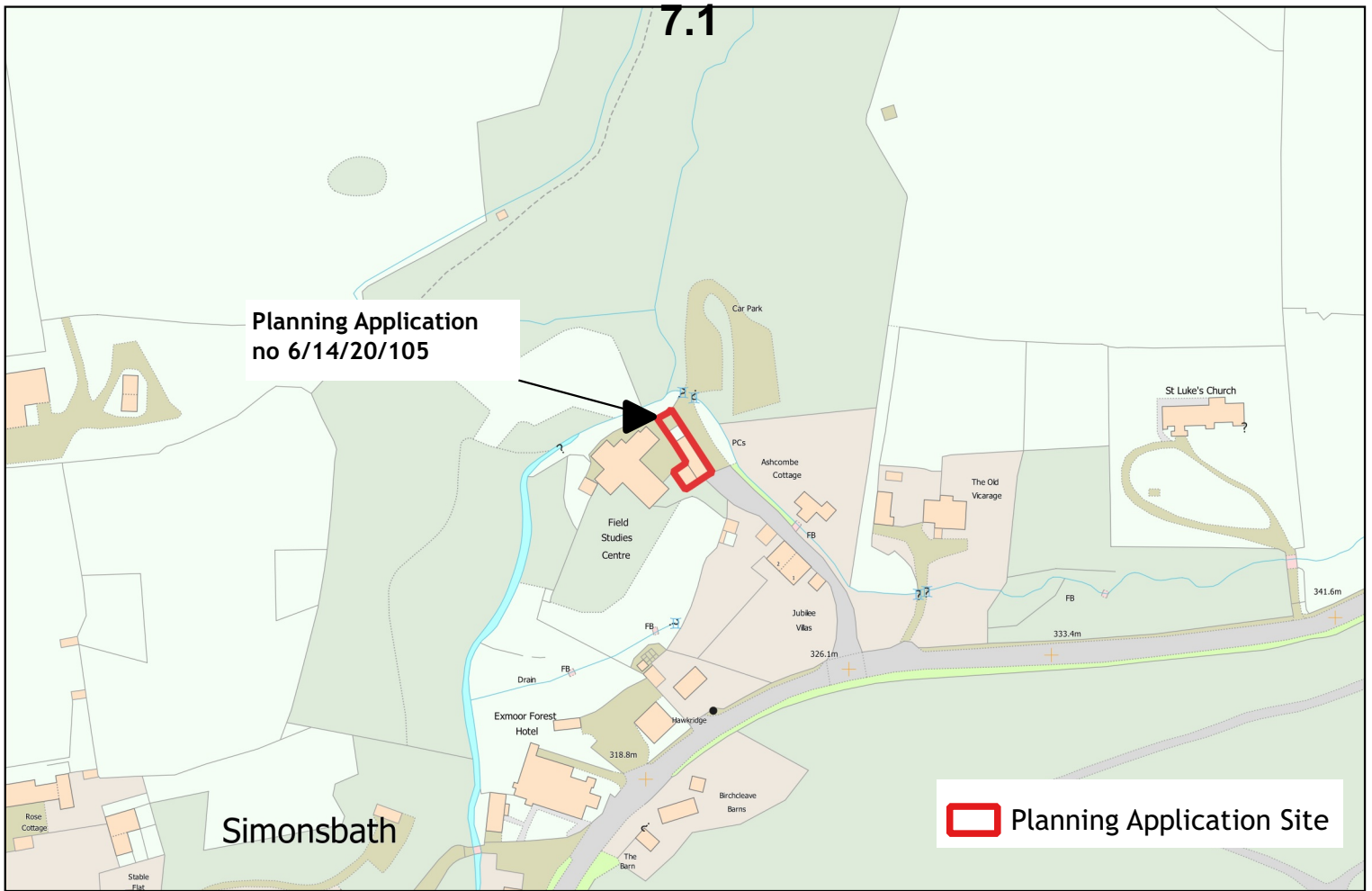
The Department of Communities and Local Government have introduced a process whereby it is now possible to apply for a non-material amendment to a permission. This can deal with changes to plans which do not fundamentally alter the form of permission but are a variation to the approval. The appropriate form is available by request at Exmoor House or by downloading from the National Park Authority web site. Applications can be made via the Planning Portal.

Please ensure that works comply with the approved plans so as to avoid the possibility that works are unauthorised and liable for enforcement action.

Advisory Note – Nesting Birds

The developers and their contractors are reminded of the legal protection afforded to nesting birds under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). In the unlikely event that nesting birds are encountered during implementation of this permission it is recommended that works stop until the young have fledged or then advice is sought from a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity.

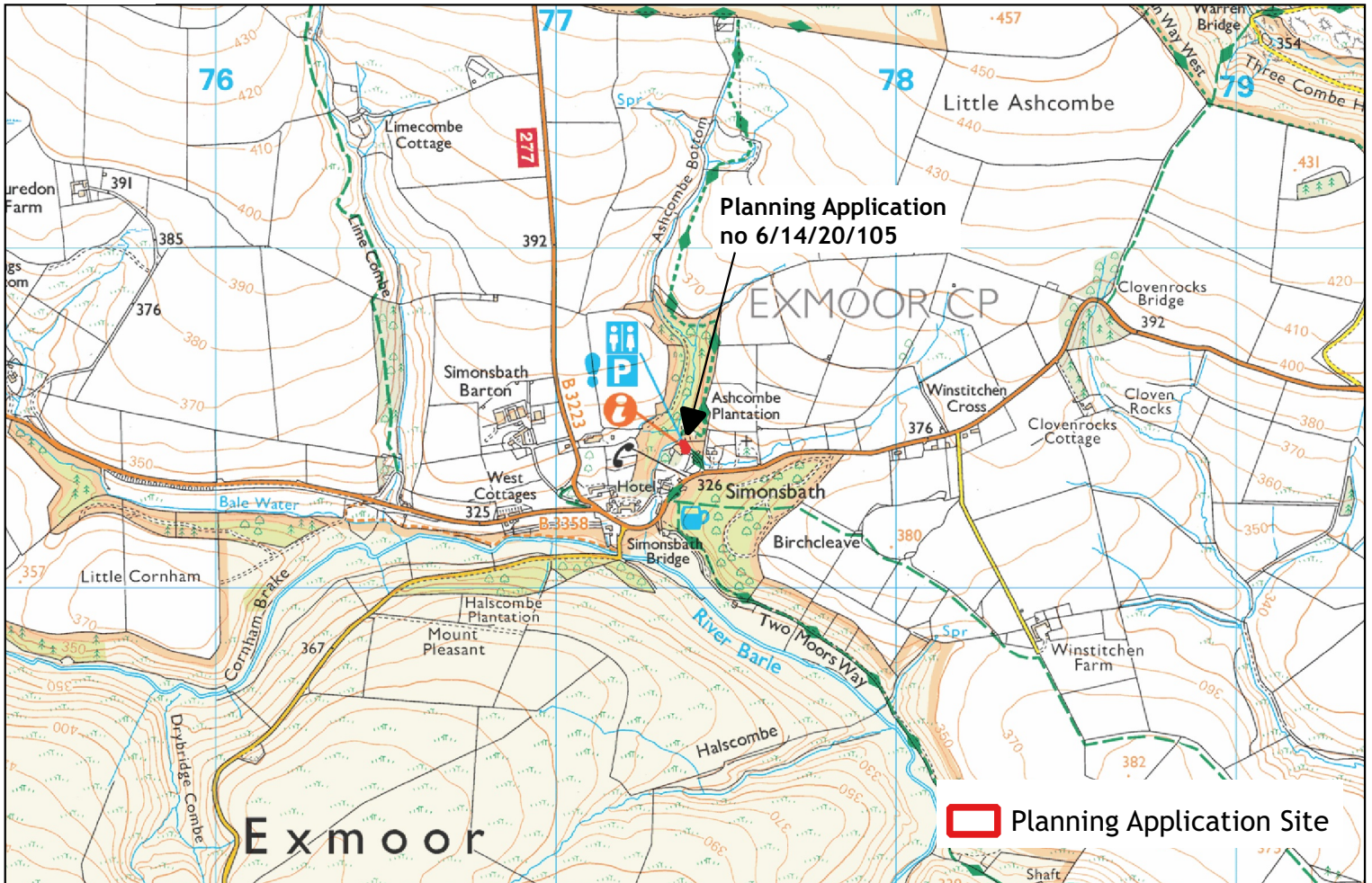
Planning Application no 6/14/20/105



Planning Application Site

Site Map
Scale 1:2500

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Planning Application no 6/14/20/105

Planning Application Site

Overview Map
Scale 1:20000

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Committee Report

Application Number:	6/14/20/106
Registration Date:	24-Sep-2020
Determination Date:	11-Nov-2020
Applicant	Exmoor National Park Authority
Agent:	
Case Officer:	Kieran Reeves
Site Address:	Ashcombe Toilet, Simonsbath, Somerset, TA24 7SH
Proposal:	Application under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for advertisement consent for the proposed installation of visitor information board and 4 no. pay and display signs. (Amended description)
Recommendation:	Approve with conditions
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	The application has been submitted by Exmoor National Park Authority in relation to land owned by the National Park Authority.

Relevant History

6/14/89/114 – Proposed extension to car park – Approved on 6th February 1990

6/14/85/101 – Proposed conversion of cowshed to public convenience and information display area – Approved on 5th March 1985

6/14/78/001 – Proposed erection of mobile public convenience and car parking for fifteen cars – Approved on 7th March 1978

Site Description & Proposal

This application came before Members at the November Committee meeting on 3rd November 2020. The application was deferred following concerns over safeguarding issues that may be caused by the timber screen that did form part of application reference, 6/14/20/105. Officers can confirm that the screen has been omitted from the planning application and in terms of this advertisement consent application, the sign that was proposed to be attached to the screen has been re-located.

Advertisement consent is sought for the installation of five signs at Ashcombe car park. The car park is situated on the northern edge of Simonsbath and is owned by the National Park Authority. It consists of an upper level and a lower level that are accessed via a single width access, which serves a number of residential properties

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as well. On the western side of the car park is a toilet building that is the subject of a separate application for repairs (reference 6/14/20/105). The car park is used by walkers, visitors to Ashcombe Gardens and people using Whiterock Cottage.

Four of the signs are advertising or showing information in relation to the pay and display machine that is also the subject of application reference 6/14/20/105. A sign would be installed at the entrance to the car park, and two would be installed within the car park, all of which would advertise the need to pay for, and display, a ticket. The fourth pay and display sign would be installed near to the machine and would provide information on the parking charges.

The other proposed sign is a visitor information board. This sign would be installed on the edge of the car park and would consist of a sloped horizontal board on timber posts. The board would contain information, including history, on Ashcombe Gardens and Whiterock Cottage.

Consultee Representations

Exmoor Parish Council – Support the application but state the following:

1. Clear signage to the car park will be hugely important as the existing signs are not adequate. It will be especially important for there to be indicators when the Car Park is Full or Closed to prevent further traffic from entering a limited space.
2. The council has concerns about overspill parking and hope that ideas of a second parking area will be considered. They hope that it doesn't push more people to park outside of the car park (i.e on the bend by Pound Cottage and the Hotel or even on the roads).
3. There are concerns about the design of the machine not being in keeping with the beautiful surrounding area. Perhaps clad or encase the parts that don't need daily access? There is a feeling that it would be a shame to ruin the very natural feel down there.
4. The parish council are really pleased that the Toilet Block is going to be upgraded and made fit for purpose. People will be using the toilets and car park in the evenings if they are in the Old School for a function and so a few sensorised outside lights would be a good thing to illuminate the toilets, car park and Old School to avoid injuries in the dark.

SCC Highway Authority – No observations.

ENPA Public Rights of Way Officer – Public footpath DU5/23 runs immediately adjacent to the development site and coincides with the access to the car park. The public footpath also carries the promoted walking route, the Two Moors Way which is a popular and well used trail. Whilst the proposed development does not appear to have a direct impact on the right of way, the development would be very visible to

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those using the public footpath. During works, it is important that the public right of way remains unobstructed and available for use by the public at all times.

ENPA Wildlife Officer – The proposed signage and board installation would have a minimal impact to protected species associated with the location.

To avoid potential noise and vibration disturbance impacts to the lesser horseshoe maternity roost within the main toilet block please attach the following informative:

- Exmoor National Park Authority are reminded of the legal protection afforded to bats and bat roosts under legislation including the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, therefore the parking information board shall be attached to the wall of the toilet block within the months of November - February to avoid any disturbance to bat roosts present. In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during implementation of this permission it is recommended that works stop and advice is sought from a suitably qualified, licensed and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity.

Limited, if any, vegetation removal looks to be required to facilitate the placing of other signage, however please also attach the following informative in relation to nesting birds that may be present in vegetation within these areas:

- The developers are reminded of the legal protection afforded to nesting birds under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). In the unlikely event that nesting birds are encountered during implementation of this permission it is recommended that works stop until the young have fledged or then advice is sought from a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity.

Representations

No public representations received at the time of writing this report.

Policy Context

Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031

GP1 – General Policy: Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development

CE-S1 – Landscape and Seascape Character

CE-D1 – Protecting Exmoor’s Landscapes and Seascapes

CE-S6 – Design and Sustainable Construction Principles

CE-D5 – Advertisements and Private Road Signs

AC-D2 – Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material planning consideration.

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Planning Considerations

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 state that a Local Planning Authority shall exercise its powers under these Regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development and other relevant factors. In relation to amenity, this includes the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural or similar interest.

Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. It is also stated that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

Policy CE-D5 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 states that “advertisements, and private road signs will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that in the interests of amenity:

- a) the proposal represents a joint or community advertisement or sign; or the advertisement is located on, or is well related to the building that is used for the business or attraction; and
- b) there will be no adverse individual, cumulative, or sequential impact on landscape character and local distinctiveness of the locality; and
- c) the size, scale, colour and siting are appropriate and the materials and design are of a high standard which conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area”.

Further to this, Policy CE-D5 states that “the proposal should have no detrimental impact on public safety” and that “opportunities to enhance existing buildings or the landscape through consolidating, redesigning or removing existing advertisements / signage will be encouraged”.

It is clear from the above that the key considerations when determining an application for advertisement consent are the impact on amenities of the area and impact on public safety and highways from the installation of the proposed signage and any associated lighting.

There are five signs proposed through this application. Four of the signs relates to the charging for parking in association with the installation of the pay and display machine proposed under planning application reference 6/14/20/105. The other proposed sign is a visitor information board for Ashcombe Gardens and Whiterock Cottage.

As detailed earlier in this report, a pay and display sign would be installed at the entrance to the car park, and two more pay and display signs would be installed within the car park. The fourth pay and display sign would be installed near to the machine and would provide information on the parking charges.

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If Members are minded to approve application reference 6/14/20/105 for the pay and display machine, then Officers consider that it is necessary to have sufficient signage to draw people's attention to the new charging regime that would be applicable to the car park at Ashcombe.

The sign at the entrance would be attached to the low wall and would be of sufficient size for motorists to notice the need to pay for, and display, a ticket without being demonstrably noticeable or causing significant harm to visual amenity. The two signs in the car park would ensure that anyone who misses the first sign would be aware of the need to pay for, and display, a ticket. Again, these are small scale signs and one would be attached to an existing natural timber post that already has signs on it. The other would be installed on a new natural timber post in the corner of the upper car park. As previously stated, these three signs would not be large signs and they are more useful due to their recognisable colours that members of the public will recognise as pay and display signs rather than their size and physical prominence. Having regards to the fact that these three signs in the car park are small scale and are typical designs seen in public car parks, they are considered to be acceptable in respect of their impact on visual amenity.

The fourth pay and display sign would be attached to the wall behind the pay and display machine proposed under application reference 6/14/20/105. This sign will be seen in close association with the pay and display machine and the wider existing built form of the site. As such, this sign should not jar within the landscape and therefore it is considered that it would not cause material harm to visual amenity.

Officers also consider that that there would not be an excessive amount of pay and display signs as a result of approving this application. There would be a sufficient amount to make people aware of the new charging regime for parking in Ashcombe car park.

The Parish Council have suggested that signs showing whether the car park is open, closed or full should be installed as well. However, the proposal before Members are the four signs as proposed and the application should be determined on whether these signs are acceptable and not whether there should be more signs.

The proposed visitor information board would be installed on the edge of the car park and it would not be adjacent to existing built form. However, its positioning is integral to users of the board being able to look at the specific features mentioned on the board while also looking at the board. This is reflected by its low and sloping form. This form also helps to prevent the board from interrupting key views from the car park towards Ashcombe Gardens and Whiterock Cottages. It is also important to note that although it is set away from existing built form, it would not be installed in a truly isolated position within the open countryside away from the car park itself. Having regards to the above, and that the posts of the board would be natural timber, which is supported under the Local Plan, the proposed visitor information board is not

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considered to, on balance, cause material harm to the landscape or visual amenity that would warrant refusal of the application.

In terms of the impact on highway safety, none of the signs would hang over or physically obstruct a public highway or the public right of way that runs through the car park. The signs would also not obstruct any visibility splays used by motorists. None of the signs would be illuminated either, meaning that there would not be a light spill impact on visual amenity nor would any motorists be dazzled or distracted by lighting.

Human Rights

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

Conclusion

Officers conclude that the proposed five signs would not cause material harm to visual amenity or the landscape, nor would they compromise highway safety, and they are therefore compliant with local and national planning policy. It is therefore recommended that advertisement consent is granted, subject to the attachment of appropriate conditions.

Recommendation

Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. The advertisement hereby approved shall be installed strictly in accordance with approved drawing number DGW/WRC007, date stamped by the Local Planning Authority on 24th September 2020, approved drawing numbers DWG/WRC001, DWG/WRC/010 and DWG/WRC/011, date stamped by the Local Planning Authority on 9th October 2020, and approved drawing number DWG/WRC/09 and Site Plan: Proposed, date stamped by the Local Planning Authority on 5th November 2020, unless otherwise agreed by condition(s) below.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of advertisement in the interests of amenity.

2. No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site on which they are displayed (this includes the highway authority, if the sign is to be placed on highway land).

Reason: Standard condition under the provisions of the Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

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3. No advertisement is to be displayed which would obscure, or hinder the interpretation of, official road, rail, waterway or aircraft signs, or otherwise make hazardous the use of these types of transport.

Reason: Standard condition under the provisions of the Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

4. Any advertisement must be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

Reason: Standard condition under the provisions of the Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

5. Any advertisement hoarding or structure is to be kept in a condition which does not endanger the public.

Reason: Standard condition under the provisions of the Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

6. If an advertisement is required to be removed, the site must be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

Reason: Standard condition under the provisions of the Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

7. The posts of the hereby approved interpretation board and the pay and display sign in the upper car park shall only be constructed from natural timber, and shall be retained as such thereafter. Any subsequent post replacements shall accord with the requirements of this condition.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion.

8. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no external lighting shall be installed on the signs hereby approved unless details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The external lighting shall thereafter be installed and operated fully in accordance with the approved scheme.

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Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and highway safety, the conservation of protected species and habitats and to protect Exmoor's dark night sky.

Informatives

Positive and Proactive Statement

This Authority has a pro-active approach to the delivery of development. Early pre-application engagement is always encouraged. In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, in determining this application, Exmoor National Park Authority has endeavoured to work positively and proactively with the agent/applicant, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, to ensure that all relevant planning considerations have been appropriately addressed to achieve a positive outcome.

Monitoring of Development

The applicant/developer is reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that the requirements of each planning condition are met and that the works are undertaken in accordance with the approved plans. Any failure to meet the terms of a planning condition or work which does not accord with the approved plans leaves the applicant/developer liable to formal action being taken. The National Park Authority endeavours to monitor on site the compliance with conditions and building works. This has benefits for applicants and developers as well as the National Park. To assist with this monitoring of development the applicant/developer is requested to give at least fourteen days notice of the commencement of development to ensure that effective monitoring can be undertaken. The Planning Section can be contacted at Exmoor National Park Authority, Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9HL or by telephone on 01398 323665 or by email plan@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk.

Conditions and Informatives and the Submission of Further Details

Please check all the conditions and informatives attached to this Decision Notice. If there are any conditions which require submission of details and/or samples prior to work commencing on site it is vital that these are submitted and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority before work starts. Given the High Court's interpretation of the Planning Acts and their lawful implementation it is unlikely that the Local Planning Authority will be able to agree to a sample/details after the commencement of works if that sample/details should have been approved prior to commencement. If a sample/detail is not agreed as required prior to commencement and works have started then it is likely that this matter may only be able to be rectified by the submission of another application. To avoid delay, inconvenience and the need to submit a further application, please ensure that all appropriate details/samples are submitted and agreed at the specified time.

Please also note that due to other decisions of the High Court it is now not normally possible for the Local Planning Authority to agree to minor amendments to approved applications on an informal basis.

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The Department of Communities and Local Government have introduced a process whereby it is now possible to apply for a non-material amendment to a permission. This can deal with changes to plans which do not fundamentally alter the form of permission but are a variation to the approval. The appropriate form is available by request at Exmoor House or by downloading from the National Park Authority web site. Applications can be made via the Planning Portal.

Please ensure that works comply with the approved plans so as to avoid the possibility that works are unauthorised and liable for enforcement action.

Advisory Note – Bats

Exmoor National Park Authority are reminded of the legal protection afforded to bats and bat roosts under legislation including the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, therefore the parking information board shall be attached to the wall of the toilet block within the months of November - February to avoid any disturbance to bat roosts present. In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during implementation of this permission it is recommended that works stop and advice is sought from a suitably qualified, licensed and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity.

Advisory Note – Nesting Birds

The developers are reminded of the legal protection afforded to nesting birds under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). In the unlikely event that nesting birds are encountered during implementation of this permission it is recommended that works stop until the young have fledged or then advice is sought from a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity.

Advisory Note – Public Rights of Way

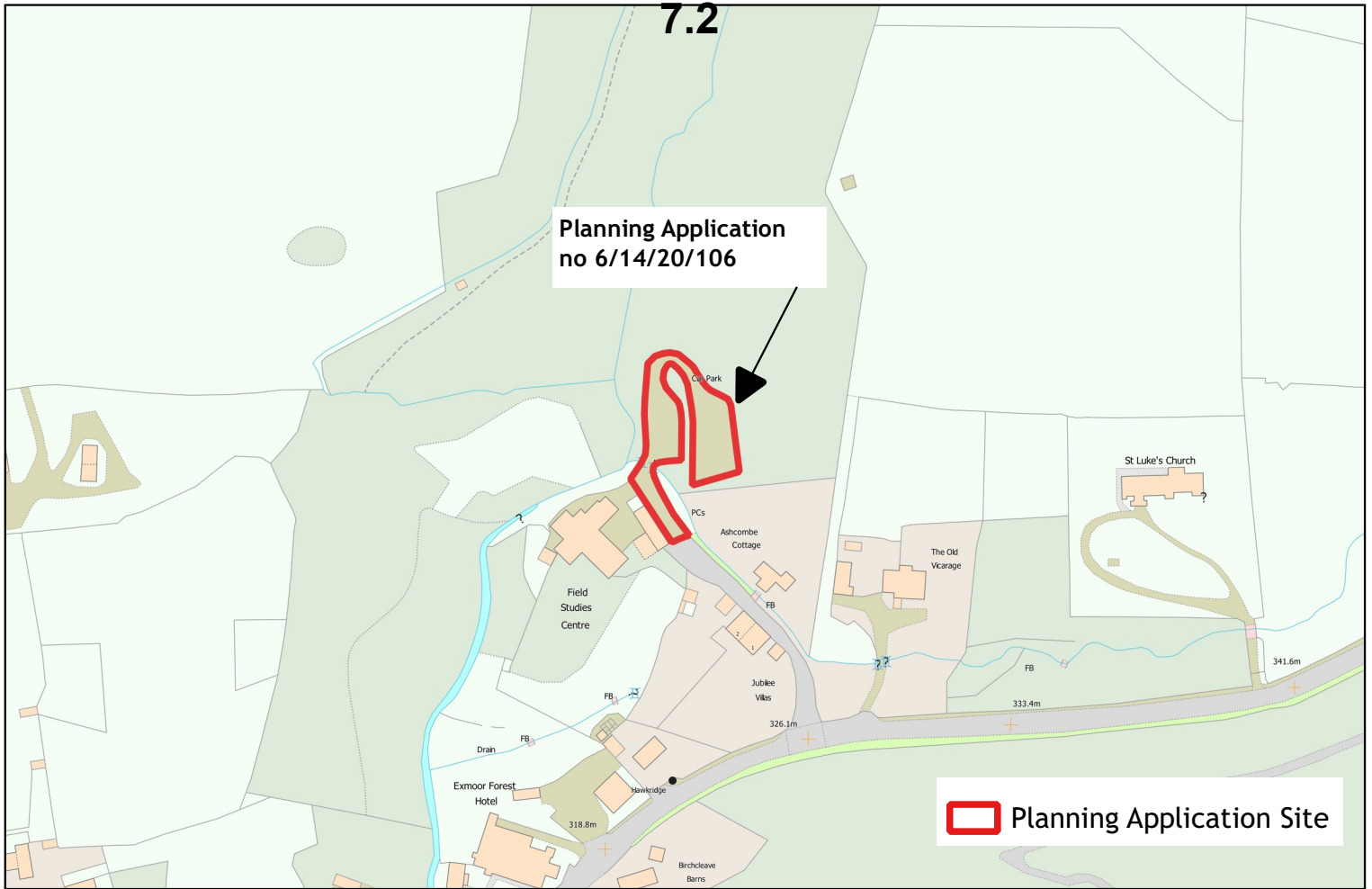
Public rights of way should be open (easy and safe to use) at all times. Please note the following:

- Care should be taken to avoid obstructing or interfering with the public rights of way or creating a hazard for users. If it is impossible to avoid interference or potential danger, the appropriate legal steps (e.g. path closure application) should be taken in advance of any works. If this is likely to be necessary, please contact ENPA (who act on behalf of the Highway Authority) or seek legal advice as soon as possible
- Any disturbance to the surface of rights of way should be avoided but if any such disturbance does occur due to the owner/occupier or their agents' use of the way, the surface should be reinstated.
- Where planning permission is granted, this does not authorise any person to stop up or divert any public right of way. Separate legal steps are needed for this
- The driving of a vehicle is only permitted on a public bridleway/footpath where the driver has lawful authority to do so
- Parking on the public right of way may be deemed to constitute an obstruction

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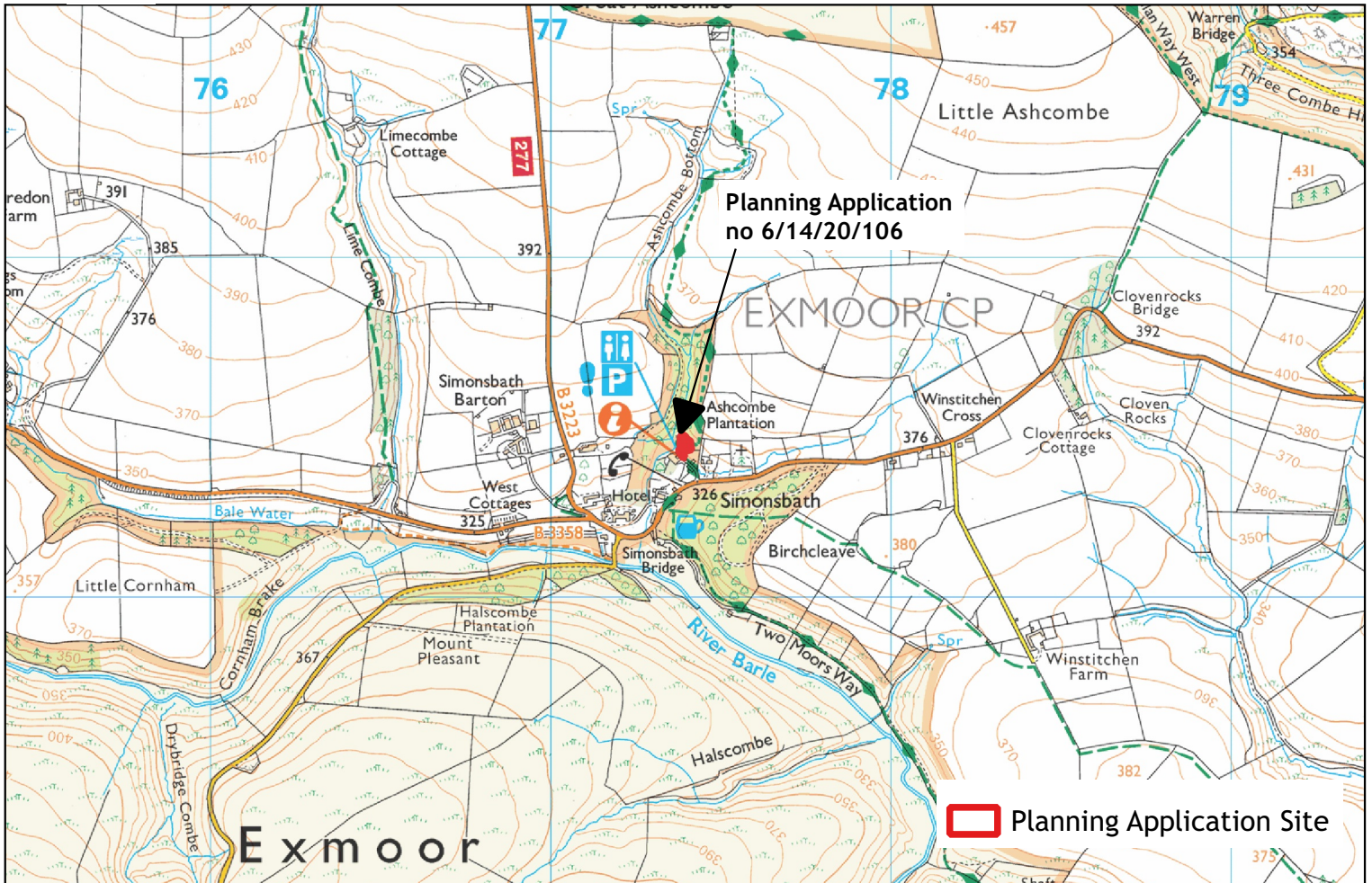
-
- Changes to the surface/drainage of a public right of way require prior authorisation from the Highway Authority (in this case ENPA as its agent)
 - New furniture (e.g. gates) being needed along a public right of way require prior authorisation from the Highway Authority (in this case ENPA as its agent)

Where an increase in vehicular traffic or other alteration in the private use of a public right of way this route is expected as a result of the development, there will be other considerations such as the impact on the maintenance requirements of the right of way.



Site Map
Scale 1:2500

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Overview Map
Scale 1:20000

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Committee Report

Application Number:	6/25/20/101
Registration Date:	13-Jan-2020
Determination Date:	09-Mar-2020
Applicant	Mr R Martin
Agent:	Mr K Bateman, Bateman Hosegood
Case Officer:	Dean Kinsella
Site Address:	Lillycombe Farm, Oare, Minehead, TA24 8JP
Proposal:	Proposed removal of 4 feed bins and erection of 4 new feed bins at alternative site. Retrospective.
Recommendation:	Approve with conditions
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	Oare Parish Meeting has a view that is contrary to the recommendation of Officers

Relevant History

6/25/16/102 – Proposed installation of a mobile telecommunications mast and ancillary equipment (24m high lattice mast above ground, supporting radio equipment and cabinet) – Approved on 20th July 2016

6/25/00/105 – Proposed erection of 10m lattice tower with three no. digital radio antennas and one no. 300dia microwave dish – Approved on 7th February 2001

6/25/00/102 – Proposed extension to barn for agricultural storage and seasonal use for livestock – Withdrawn on 15th June 2001

6/25/99/102 – Proposed extension of building, seasonal use for livestock and installation of sheep dipping/handling facilities – Withdrawn on 20th March 2000

GDO 96/03 – Proposed two extensions to existing building – Approved on 22nd March 1996

Site Description & Proposal

Background

This proposal was previously presented to the Planning Committee on the 7th July 2020 where members resolved to defer the application following the submission of a

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letter by the applicant which included a Counsel Opinion. The Opinion raised the following additional matters which the applicant felt should be considered:

- (1) Consider whether the issue of future landscape harm can be remedied by a section 106 agreement; and
- (2) If they consider that it can be, grant permission subject to agreement of such a s.106 obligation; or
- (3) If there is concern that there may be landscape harm, adjourn the application to allow for a site visit.

Consideration of the points raised in the applicant's submission are discussed within the report below.

Site Description

Planning permission is sought for the retention of four feed silos at the Lillycombe Estate which is situated between Porlock and County Gate. The site of the silos is next to agricultural buildings that are located to the north of Lillycombe House. There is also a 24 metres tall telecommunication mast present near to the silos. The site is also near Quarter Barrow and is within a row of tumuli, two of which are Scheduled Monuments.

Proposed Development

The four replacement feed silos are typical cylindrical structures that are constructed from metal. They have varying heights. One silo has an approximate height of 6.8 metres, two silos have approximate heights of 7.8 metres and the fourth silo has an approximate height of 9.7 metres. This is contrary to the submitted Planning Statement that states that all four silos are 6.1 metres tall. All four silos have been constructed on a new concrete base that was laid to facilitate their siting.

Consultee Representations

Oare Parish Meeting – I contacted you in late March in order to communicate that we, as residents of Oare and Culbone, are entirely supportive of Lillycombe's planning application for their grain silos in their feed and works facility in Culbone. However, it has come to my attention that there is some resistance from the ENPA to the scheme. As Chair of Oare and Culbone Parish Meeting, I would like to make our position entirely clear on this - we believe the scheme should be approved without any further delay for these reasons:

- 1) I have visited the site myself and cannot see how it may be considered as detrimental to the environment - especially as it is adjacent to the radio tower which is possibly more than twice as high.
- 2) The silos are not visible from any footpath or any of the most commonly used parts of the area.

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- 3) In my opinion, any costs associated with lowering the silo would be entirely disproportionate to the benefits of doing so.
 - 4) The Lillycombe shoot is the area's ONLY major employer and brings a significant income into this, a relatively poor parish. Their investment should be applauded, not thwarted. The grain silos are an integral part of their business operation.
 - 5) I am aware of similar plants in the Hollam shoot outside Dulverton which, like the Lillycombe silos, are hidden from the general public and touristic interests.
 - 6) My own involvement in the hospitality business would preclude me from supporting anything that had a detrimental effect on the environment, which is our only attraction.

Other local residents (CCed here) are co-signatories to this email. No doubt I could gather further supportive signatures were it not for being the height of the lambing season. I hope that this makes our position absolutely clear and the Authority Committee approves the application as soon as is practicable in the current conditions.

SCC Highway Authority – No observations.

Historic England – On the basis of the information available to date, we do not wish to offer any comments. We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers, as relevant.

ENPA Senior Landscape Officer – Site Context: The application site forms the northern extent of Lillycombe Farm, a group of non-traditional farm buildings to the northern side of the A39 public highway at Oare and forms part of the wider Lillycombe Estate. This is an isolated building grouping in a ridge of highly elevated and exposed ground (410m AOD) in the open countryside. There are designated heritage assets immediately to the east of the application site and the area is within Section 3 land defined as 'Woodland'. There is an existing telecommunications mast to the south east of the application site adjacent to existing farm buildings.

Landscape Character: The application site is within Exmoor Landscape Character Type F 'Enclosed Farmed Hills with Commons'. Key features of this landscape character type are a broad rolling terrain of hills and ridges; land use typically permanent pasture; and a regular pattern of late enclosure fields on higher ground. This is an area rich in cultural heritage with designated sites within and in very close proximity to the application site. The surrounding mature pine woodland is a distinctive feature to this elevated location because of its height and form due to the exposed location. With the adjacent Culbone Hill, the application site forms the high point of a ridge of elevated ground between the vast open moorland to the south of the A39 and the steeply descending coastal cliffs to the north. The wider landscape is of exceptional quality, typifying the special qualities of the National Park.

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Visual Amenity: The site is visible from the public highway where adjacent to the access track leading to the site, and from the wider landscape including the areas of open moorland and access land on the approaches from Brendon Common. This is an area of high visual quality with far reaching panoramic views in all directions. The existing telecommunications mast on the site is visible from an extensive area.

Comments: This retrospective proposal presents a development change in a highly sensitive location due to its elevation, topography, the quality of the surrounding wider landscape and the significant historic environment interests in this area. The proposal has resulted in insensitive and expansive excavation and construction works that do not seek to either conserve or enhance the surrounding landscape character or quality. The development impact is increased by the taller height of one of the four installed feed bins (contrary to the Planning Statement submitted for the application which states all four bins are the 6.1m in height) at a height of approximately 10.5m, above the ridge line height of the associated group of farm buildings. It is unclear what purpose further excavation works to the west of the feed bin location contribute in delivering the outlined needs of this application and further increase the impact of this development change. Additionally, the location of the new feed bins separated from the main farm buildings further increases the area of development change.

It is considered a more sensitive and careful approach could have resulted in a less impactful development change if the height of the bins and the location of these within the wider holding had been fully planned prior to installation works being carried out. As presented, the addition of four new feed bins with no associated mitigating proposals, results in unnecessary harm to the landscape character including historic context and to the wider visual quality of the National Park landscape.

ENPA Wildlife Officer – No observations.

Representations

No public representations received at the time of writing of this report.

Policy Context

Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031

GP1 – General Policy: Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development

CE-S1 – Landscape and Seascape Character

CE-D1 – Protecting Exmoor's Landscapes and Seascapes

CE-S2 – Protecting Exmoor's Dark Night Sky

CE-S6 – Design and Sustainable Construction Principles

SE-S1 – A Sustainable Exmoor Economy

SE-S3 – Business Development in The Open Countryside

SE-S4 – Agricultural and Forestry Development

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The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material planning consideration.

Planning Considerations

The main material planning considerations in the case is the principle of development, the design, scale and materials, and the impact on the landscape and neighbouring amenity.

Principle of Development

The four silos that this application seeks to retain are used for agricultural purposes and for commercial purposes in relation to the game shoot that functions at the Lillycombe Estate. As such, two key planning policies are considered to be Policies SE-S3 and SE-S4 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031.

Policy SE-S1 seeks to strengthen, enhance and diversify the Exmoor economy, business and employment development. Proposals should demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on local amenity, landscape character, cultural heritage, sensitive habitat and wildlife.

Policy SE-S3 states that proposals for extensions to existing business sites or buildings that are well-related to an existing group of buildings on a farmstead or in a hamlet where there is an existing dwelling will be permitted in accordance with Policy SE-S1 and where the scale and appearance of the development are compatible with local landscape character.

Policy SE-S4 states that permission will be granted for new or replacement buildings or structures where it can be demonstrated there is a functional need for the building or structure and its size and scale is commensurate with the demonstrated need. Further to this, in the case of new buildings or structures, the site should be related physically and functionally to existing buildings associated with the business.

The silos have been erected in close proximity to the main farm buildings for the Lillycombe Estate. The application papers explain that the silos are partly used to store feed for the sheep that are kept on the farm holding. On the basis of this information, there is an asserted agriculturally functional need for the silos and the Local Planning Authority has no evidence to dispute this.

In terms of the storage of pheasant feed, the silos' location close to the existing farm buildings (not in an isolated location) means that as an extension to the existing commercial pheasant operation of the estate their use for such purposes is considered to be compliant in principle with Policies SE-S1 & SE-S3.

Overall, Officers consider that the retention of these four silos for storing feed associated with agricultural and game shooting purposes is acceptable and compliant

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in principle with the Local Plan, subject to other material planning considerations being satisfied.

Design, Scale and Materials & Impact on Landscape

The design and materials of the four silos are considered to be typical for this form of development, where the emphasis is on function over aesthetics. The metal construction in the form of cylindrical structures is considered to be acceptable when having regards to this fact.

In terms of the consideration of the scale of the development and its impact on the landscape and seascape, it is important to note that the site is within the Heritage Coast and Policy CE-S1 states that development proposals within this landscape designation should also have regard to, and be appropriate in terms of impact on, and the conservation of, significant landscape and seascape attributes.

Policy CE-D1 states that within Exmoor's Heritage Coast development should be appropriate to the coastal location and conserve the undeveloped nature of the coast consistent with Heritage Coast purposes.

The Authority's Landscape Officer has advised that the application site is within Exmoor Landscape Character Type F 'Enclosed Farmed Hills with Commons', which is characterised by its broad rolling terrain of hills and ridges, land uses that are typically permanent pasture and a regular pattern of late enclosure fields on higher ground. It is also stated this is an area rich in cultural heritage with designated sites within and in very close proximity to the application site. There are tumuli to the east and west of the site. Two of the tumuli are Scheduled Monuments, one is approximately 300 metres to the east and the other is approximately 375 metres to the west. The Landscape Officer goes on to advise that the application site forms the high point of a ridge of elevated ground between the vast open moorland to the south of the A39 and the steeply descending coastal cliffs to the north, and that the wider landscape is of exceptional quality, typifying the special qualities of the National Park

The agricultural buildings that the silos have been erected near are understood to have a maximum height of approximately 6.5 metres. It is understood that silos will typically be taller than barns but the tallest silo (approximately 9.7 metres) is considerably taller and does have a negative impact on the landscape character.

The Landscape Officer has commented that this retrospective proposal presents a development change in a highly sensitive location due to its elevation, topography, the quality of the surrounding wider landscape and the significant historic environment interests in this area.

Officers acknowledge that the silos are not overtly visible from the wider landscape due to the mature pine planting that surrounds the majority of the site. The proposed silo's, particularly the tallest silo would be reliant on these trees to screen the proposal. Having had further discussion's, the applicant has agreed to the imposition

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of a planning condition to manage and maintain the existing woodland. The retention of the silos is heavily reliant on the planting and with careful management of the existing woodland it is considered that this is achievable. The applicants have also offered to provide additional tree planting to the north of the site. This would, in time provide a further backdrop for the tallest silo. However, it is recognised that even with this, the tallest of the silos will still have some impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape and historic environment but would protect the backdrop, and in time, increase the screening/backdrop to the silos.

The applicant was invited to submit their professional view on the likely impact the development has on the surrounding landscape character. In response the agent states that the proposed development would have no impact upon the landscape character. The agent considers that the development has not had an impact on the regular pattern of late enclosure fields, narrow lanes nor that the proposal adversely affects the peaceful or tranquil nature of the area.

The proposed retention of the silos is not considered to cause a level of material harm to the Scheduled Monuments that are to the east and west of the site. Historic England have confirmed that they do not wish to provide specific comments on this application. The tallest silo is visible from the Monument to the east but the distance is considered to be such that it would not have a direct impact on its setting. However, the scale of the development is considered to impact on the overall historic landscape character of this site, which is within a belt of historic tumuli along the ridge of this elevated landscape. This, even with the proposed mitigation contributes to the overall landscape character impact, particularly in the short term.

Officers have attempted to seek changes to the proposal to reduce the developments impact. This has included the removal of the tallest silo and replacing it with two silos. However, the applicant has stated that due to the size of the delivery vehicles, the height of the silo is necessary and the expense of replacing the silo is considered significant. It is important to stress that the lack of an alternative scheme in itself is not a reason to approve an application and does not carry weight in the decision making process.

Officers also acknowledge that the four silos have been erected near to a 24 metres high telecommunication mast. The applicant has submitted Counsel Opinion which raised concerns that there may be inconsistency in the decision-making process. This was in part due to the officer report associated with the mast stating that the proposed 24m lattice mast offered no landscape impact. This decision is clearly a material consideration. However, officers are not bound by the conclusions of this previous application. Your officers do consider that the current application, and the existing mast, offers some harm to the surrounding landscape character and historic environment. The presence of the existing mast is considered only to add to the harm and causes a landscape impact when both are read within the landscape. This weighs against granting planning permission.

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There are benefits associated with the retention of these feed silos, although these are considered to be minimal and limited to the applicant and the local economy.

Paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires Great weight to be applied to the protection and conservation of the National Park's protected landscape and scenic beauty. The retention of the silos is considered to have a harmful impact upon the surrounding landscape and scenic beauty. Conditions to retain the surrounding tree planting and add additional planting will reduce this impact in the long term but does not remove the harm completely, especially in the short term. However, as the trees mature the impact the development, in particular on the wider views will be reduced. However, the presence of the development within the landscape cannot be considered to conserve the undeveloped nature of the Heritage Coast and therefore, it is considered that the proposal is in conflict with policies CE-D1 & CE-S1 of the local plan.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

The four silos have been erected within the open countryside, away from residential properties. The silos' significant physical separation from any residential property means that the silos do not impact on neighbouring amenity as a result of overbearing or loss of light.

Other Matters

In May 2019 the UK government declared a climate emergency, Exmoor National Park followed this by declaring a Climate Emergency in October 2019. To help meet this challenge the Local plan includes policies which seek to influence, contribute and challenge development to help meet the Climate Emergency.

Policy GP1 of the Local Plan sets out that the need to consider future generations, through sustainability and resilience to climate change and adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Policy CC-S1 states that climate change mitigation will be encouraged, development which reduces demand for energy, using small scale low carbon and renewable energy, looks to situate development which avoids sites that would put wildlife at risk together with measures which avoids the risk of flooding.

Policy CC-S5 seeks to support small scale renewable energy schemes that assist in contributing towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and moving towards a carbon neutral National Park and Policy CE-S6 seeks to incorporate sustainable construction methods which future proof against climate change impacts, including flood risk.

Paragraph 148 of the National Planning Policy Framework prescribes that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and

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low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

There has been an impact on the climate from erecting the silos, but this impact is considered to be negligible. There is also an impact on vehicles visiting the site to load the silos. However, officers consider that the impact on the climate resulting from the development is relatively minimal and a further reason for refusal should not be included on the grounds of climate impact.

In terms of ecology it is considered that the proposal will not have a significant impact upon the surrounding wildlife. No ecological survey has been submitted with the application, and the intervention has been limited to the excavation of the ground to facilitate the erection of the silos. The applicant has agreed to further planting to the north of the site and there are potential benefits to the surrounding wildlife.

Human Rights

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

Conclusion

The principle of the retention of these four feed silos is considered to be acceptable. The provision of the silos helps to facilitate the wider operations of the farm and shooting activities. These activities do provide benefit to the wider local economy and weighs in favour of the proposal.

The development does have a landscape impact which is detrimental to the surrounding landscape character. Mitigation, by way of the retention of surrounding tree planting, additional planting will lessen the impact over time and could lead to other ecological improvements, but the proposal is still considered to be contrary to the requirement of policies CE-D2 & CE-S1 to conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty and weigh against the proposal.

When balancing all of the matters and having consideration to the proposed mitigation it is considered, on balance, that the proposal is acceptable and accords with the Local Plan when read as a whole.

Recommendation

Approve the application subject to the following conditions:

Informatives

7.3

Positive and Proactive Statement

This Authority has a pro-active approach to the delivery of development. Early preapplication engagement is always encouraged. In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, in determining this application, Exmoor National Park Authority has endeavoured to work positively and proactively with the agent/applicant, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, to ensure that all relevant planning considerations have been appropriately addressed to achieve a positive outcome.

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Committee Report

Application Number:	6/25/20/105
Registration Date:	20-May-2020
Determination Date:	14-Jul-2020
Applicant	Mr Rupert Martin
Agent:	Mr Ross Wright, Bateman Hosegood
Case Officer:	Kieran Reeves
Site Address:	Lillycombe Farm, Porlock, Minehead, TA24 8JP
Proposal:	Resubmission of application ref 6/25/20/102 for the retention of helicopter pad (6m x 6m). Retrospective.
Recommendation:	Refusal
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	Oare Parish Meeting has a formal view that is contrary to the recommendation of Officers

Relevant History

6/25/20/102 – Proposed 6 x 6 metre helicopter pad (Retrospective) – Withdrawn on 22nd April 2020

Site Description & Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the retention of a helipad that has been constructed on the Lillycombe estate. The centre of the estate consists of a Grade II listed house, two Grade II listed cottages and a range of nearby buildings. This part of the estate is accessible from two access drives off the A39. The helipad has been constructed next to the western drive.

The Lillycombe estate also includes The Culbone Inn and Yarnor Moor Lodge, which is a residential property that is situated opposite The Culbone. The applicant also owns a group of modern agricultural buildings at Quarter Barrow, to the north east of the main complex of the estate, and four feed silos have also been constructed there.

The helipad consists of a 6 metres by 6 metres concrete pad that has been constructed on the eastern side of a field adjacent to the access drive. It has been constructed approximately 15 metres away from a public footpath (ref. WL 17/8). Approximately 550 metres to the west is a public bridleway (ref. WL 17/11). It is also approximately 40 metres south of the A39.

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The site of the helipad is also located approximately 200 metres north east of Exmoor Heaths Special Area of Conservation and the North Exmoor Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The helipad has been constructed to allow guests of the Lillycombe shooting estate to fly to the property by helicopter. It has also been suggested in the application papers that it can be used by the air ambulance attending emergencies on the estate or beyond the estate.

A planning application was previously submitted for the retention of the helipad (ref. 6/25/20/102) but this was withdrawn earlier this year.

Consultee Representations

Oare Parish Meeting – As Chair of Oare Parish Meeting, I would like to register my approval for the helicopter pad proposal at Lillycombe. I regard it as an essential piece of infrastructure to attract and cater for high-value clients in an area that is largely economically dormant in the Winter months. I endorse the fact that the shoot employs local staff and numerous local tradespeople, and its commercial success is central to the economic wellbeing of the immediate area. In fact, it's no exaggeration to say it is uniquely important to the area in this respect. In addition, I am probably the closest neighbour to the proposed helicopter pad and I have no misgivings about any potential noise pollution, particularly given that the operating window will be strictly limited. Consequently, the proposal has my full support.

SCC Highway Authority – This Authority does not wish to make comment further to those previously submitted under application 6/25/20/102. On receipt of an amended plan a favourable recommendation can be given.

Comments on 6/25/20/102 – The position of the landing pad appears to be in close proximity to the A39 (approx 40m) and advice given to this Authority by the Civil Aviation Authority is that it would be prudent of the council to ensure that the site keeper is able to operate to the heliport safely without having to conduct either an approach or take-off directly over the road at low height.

Whilst most types of helicopter can accept some cross wind component, performance is maximised by making into-wind approaches and take-offs. Having helicopters flying directly across the main road at low heights will bring them into conflict with vehicles on the A39, especially HGVs, busses and coaches, and will increase the risk of collisions.

In this regard, the Highway Authority recommends this application be refused on the grounds of highway safety.

On receipt of amended plans showing the landing pad being position distant from the highway further consideration will be given.

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ENPA Public Rights of Way & Access Officer – I continue to be unable to support this application and my comments as stated previously still stand. These are included below for clarity.

Thank you for consulting me on the above application. Public footpath WL17/8 passes just to the east of the development site and within the same field. This public footpath forms an important link in the rights of way network and is part of the Coleridge Way promoted walking route. I estimate that the helicopter pad is approximately 15 metres from the public footpath. A number of bridleways run within a mile radius of the site including public bridleway WL17/11 which runs to the west of the site and is approximately 550 metres at its closest point.

The helicopter pad location is very close to the public footpath and very visible from it. The public footpath is not marked on the plans that have been submitted with the application, despite it's close proximity to the site. There is no information in the application about the frequency or patterns of usage of the pad.

There is certainly potential for someone using the public footpath to be startled or surprised by a helicopter landing or taking off in such close proximity. Indeed, it is questionable whether someone would be able to use the public footpath when a helicopter is taking off or landing or is on the ground with the blades still rotating. This could cause members of the public to have to wait for an undetermined length of time before being able to use the public footpath and may constitute an illegal deterrent regardless of whether or not planning permission is granted. My view is that the pad is positioned too close to the public footpath. Additionally, there is considerable potential for helicopters approaching or leaving the pad to startle those using some of the surrounding bridleways, particularly WL17/11 to the west, in particular equestrians.

For the reasons outlined above, I am not able to support the above application.

Exmoor Society – Further to preliminary comments submitted on 30 March, The Exmoor Society objected to the retrospective planning application for a helicopter pad at Lillycombe Farm on 7 April 2020. This application was subsequently withdrawn and re-submitted and The Exmoor Society continues to object for the following reasons.

It is sited next to the A39 one of the most popular tourist routes in the national park with stunning coastal views over much of its length. The helicopter pad location is visibly intrusive from the A39 and other areas.

Local residents in the Porlock Vale area have noticed increased noise from helicopters recently and observed the addition of small, non-emergency helicopters.

This site is close to a public footpath, near a public bridleway and poses a significant disturbance and risk to other users as the flight path to the site is dependent on variable wind direction.

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Overall, the helicopter pad will have a significant negative impact on the tranquillity of the national park.

Exmoor Local Access Forum – Exmoor Local Access Forum (ELAF) reasons for objection. The fact that this a retrospective planning application and is being resubmitted with no amendments or changes being made and with no regard to public enjoyment of Exmoor's Rights of Way network. It was felt necessary for ELAF to comment accordingly.

The helipad is very close – within 15 metres - to WL17/8 a public footpath. Walkers in close proximity to the helipad could feel very intimidated by a low flying helicopter with its strong down draft which can be a frightening experience and can blow over small or lightweight people. Children and dogs are often particularly scared and far less tolerant to excessive noise as that from a landing/ taking off helicopter. The above observations could be deemed as a legal "Obstruction" to a public path.

This particular footpath, WL17/8, is part of the well-used, popular and nationally promoted route, the Coleridge Way, which brings in very real economic benefits too many small businesses across Exmoor.

Safety factors which should be considered. There is a public bridleway which runs to the west of the existing helipad some 550 metres away. Helicopters routinely operate at below 100ft down to ground level. At this low height, above or near a horse, may well cause the animal to bolt with possibly dire results. The busy A39 is very close to the helipad which could cause a dangerous distraction to driver when helicopters are operating in the immediate area.

National Park purposes are clearly set out in statute. One of which is to allow the public to enjoy the peace and tranquillity in an area of special landscape. As helicopters are particularly loud and intrusive especially when landing or taking off, this application does not comply with this National Park purpose.

West Somerset & Exmoor Bridleway Association – Surprised to see this application re submitted with no changes made to original application? This despite written assurances by the applicant to remove existing helipad when application 6/25/20/102 was formally withdrawn. The response below is fully endorsed by the British Horse Society. Safety concern for horse riders over helicopters landing in such close proximity to a Public Bridleway, WL17/11. Before a helicopter lands it is routine practise for a pilot to carry out a low and circling swoop around the helipad to check for any hazards. This circling would be directly over a bridleway which lies just to the west of the helipad. As a walker and member of the Long Distance Walkers Association, I strongly object to helicopters being allowed to land so close to a Public Footpath which is also part of the highly popular and promoted Coleridge Way. Safety concerns for landing a helicopter so close to a busy main tourist route - the A39. Potentially a dangerous distraction to drivers. Recommend this helipad is re sited away from it's current location. Public safety and enjoyment would not then be

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compromised. Lillycombe Shoot could still offer the landing facility of a helipad to its guests, albeit with sensible agreed restrictions.

Somerset Ramblers – Just to confirm the Ramblers original objection to the below Resubmission Application is still valid.

Comments on 6/25/20/102 – Somerset Ramblers is opposed to this planning application as we believe that the location of a helipad so close to a public right of way will produce a potential hazard, especially from the downdraught of a helicopter landing or taking off.

We feel that the provision of a facility for the landing of helicopters, which are a particularly noisy type of aircraft, in a National Park and specifically at this location is totally inappropriate. It is also close to two large areas of open space and the noise will detract from peaceful enjoyment of both the public bridleway and of these open spaces.

There also must be safety concerns with helicopters landing close to a busy main road and also close to a bridleway which could endanger horse riders by frightening their horse.

Natural England – Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development is unlikely to have significant adverse impacts on designated sites and has no objection.

We would advise that a suitably worded condition is attached to any planning permission to limit, as proposed, the period of use for the helipad (September to January inclusive) and the number of flights (8 flights within the 5 month period).

As the Competent Authority, Exmoor National Park Authority is required to conduct a Habitat Regulations screening to determine the significance of impacts on European sites and the scope for mitigation and to demonstrate that the requirements of Regulations 63 and 64 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 have been considered.

ENPA Wildlife Officer – Biodiversity Enhancement (Net Gain)

As enhancement and compensation measures, and in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), please apply the following condition to any planning permission granted.

- A Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan (BMEP) shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement. Photographs of the installed features, or progress of, will also be submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation: The content of the BMEP shall include the following:

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A 100 square metre block of grassland on the western boundary of the helipad field will be restored to a native sward comparable to the North Exmoor SSSI. The block will be fenced off from intensive sheep grazing, with management following prescriptions within the wider SSSI, including low intensity grazing through the winter and optional topping of dominant vegetation during the late autumn.

Provided the above condition and those stated within the HRA are applied as worded, I have no objection to this application.

Environment Agency – Consultation response dated 23rd June 2020 – We recommend that this application is not determined until such time that the applicant has submitted further details to demonstrate how the risk of pollution to the local environment can be managed. The reason for this position and advice is provided below.

Reason – We received the consultation from the Health and Safety Executive on the 2nd June 2020. We have reviewed the application in consideration of nearby Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) regulation sites. There are no nearby COMAH sites that we regulate. Therefore, we do not believe there is a risk to local COMAH sites from helicopters flying to this area as they would not get low to the ground until they were close to the pad. There is no indication of storage of hazardous chemicals or materials that would require COMAH notification.

The helipad is located near to where a spring issues. Any issues, such as fire, accident or damage with the helicopter could cause pollution in both the ground surrounding the helipad and the nearby stream. The land immediately adjacent to the helipad slopes away to the south, directly towards the stream.

The access road is shown to run to the south east and we presume that the road is also already constructed. This road may act as a hard pathway for any chemical or fuel spillages towards the stream. We suggest that suitable pollution prevention equipment such as spill kits (including oil absorbent booms, pads and equipment) should be either stored at the helipad or made available close by during landing, take off, maintenance and any refuelling activities in case of leaks or spillages from the helicopter.

We recommend that the applicant should submit further information detailing how the risks are to be managed during the operation of the helipad.

Re-consultation response dated 12th October 2020 – Following review of the additional information submitted by email from Kevin Bateman of Bateman Hosegood Ltd (dated 9th October 2020), we have no objection to the proposed development as submitted.

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Reason – The details provided in the submitted email satisfy our previous concerns regarding pollution risk to the spring near to the development site. It states that the as the field slopes away from the access track, and potential pollution should run onto the field and not be directed along the access track to the spring.

Avon & Somerset Police – I have no further comments to add to those contained in my email dated 01/04/2020 submitted in respect of the original application (6/25/20/102).

Comments on 6/25/20/102 – I have been in contact with PS Dan Bishop, PC Dilworth-Smith and PCSO Brookes, members of the Neighbourhood Policing Team responsible for policing the area where this helipad is located, and neither have any concerns regarding its location. They state that it is sited within a very large estate at the top of Porlock Hill well away from any dwellings and residents. Neither officer can foresee any potential future issues.

Similarly, from a designing out crime perspective, I have no comments to make.

Health & Safety Executive – HSE is a statutory consultee for certain developments within the consultation distance (CD) of major hazard sites and major accident hazard pipelines, and has provided planning authorities with access to HSEs Planning Advice WebApp <https://pa.hsl.gov.uk>. I should therefore be grateful if you would arrange for HSEs Planning Advice WebApp to be used to consult HSE for advice on this application, to see if it lies within the CD of a Major Hazard Site or Pipeline.

Comments from the **Civil Aviation Authority** and the **British Helicopter Association** were also forwarded to the Local Planning Authority by a member of the public. They did not respond directly to the consultation letters sent out by the Local Planning Authority. Their comments to the member of the public are set out below in the interests of clarity.

Civil Aviation Authority – As you know the attached detailed response from Tim Fauchon has been copied to me for comment, as the gateway for these matters at CAA. I wholly concur with his response as far as it relates to the provision of tie-down points at surface level onshore heliports. Picking up on the reference in CAP 437, which Tim has highlighted, there is a corresponding scheme for purpose-built elevated heliports (onshore) and this is described in CAP 1264, from Section 3.41 on page 47. The example of the tie-down configuration given in Figure 4-5 mirrors the corresponding scheme given in CAP 437 for offshore helidecks.

British Helicopter Association – There is no requirement to have tie down rings build into an inshore helicopter pad. CAP 437 which details the “Standards for offshore helicopter landing areas” mentions tie down rings at page 62: [http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP437\(SEP2018\)E8_A1.pdf](http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP437(SEP2018)E8_A1.pdf)

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CAP 793 “Safe Operating Practices at Unlicensed Aerodromes (Including Helicopter Landing Sites and Aerodromes Used for Flying Training)” does not mention them at Appendix D which deals with HLSs.

The overarching document from which the basic requirements come from is ICAO Annex 14 Vol II and Amendment 9 to them has just been released for comment. The closest thing to a HLS pad requirement is:

Helicopter stands

Note – The provisions of this section do not specify the location for helicopter stands but allow a high degree of flexibility in the overall design of the heliport. However, it is not considered good practice to locate helicopter stands under a flight path. See the Heliport Manual (Doc 9261) for further guidance.

3.1.44 A helicopter stand shall:

- a) provide:
 - 1. an area free of obstacles and of sufficient size and shape to ensure containment of every part of the largest helicopter the stand is intended to serve when it is being positioned within the stand;
 - 2. a surface which:
 - i. is resistant to the effects of rotor downwash;
 - ii. is free of irregularities that would adversely affect the manoeuvring of helicopters;
 - iii. has bearing strength capable of withstanding the intended loads;
 - iv. has sufficient friction to avoid skidding of helicopters or slipping of persons; and
 - v. ensures effective drainage while having no adverse effect on the control or stability of a wheeled helicopter when being manoeuvred under its own power, or when stationary; and
- b) be associated with a protection area.

However, the proviso a) 1) does not generally apply to pads where as long as all the aircraft undercarriage fits on with a margin for comfort there is no need to have all the rotor disk ‘on’ the pad. Again, there is no mention of tie down rings. Generally, as you indicated, in our chat, blades are strapped to strong points on the fuselage or undercarriage as these come with the aircraft and alleviates the need to carry stakes.

The long and short of it is that there is no publication which mentions lashing down of helicopters produced by the CAA. This advice tends to be found in aircraft operating manuals and then it will give wind speeds at which an aircraft should be lashed down. For something like a top heavy Puma this will included lashing it to the ground to stop it being blown over.

7.4

Representations

Two members of the public have made representations in relation to this application. Both of whom object to the application. One of the objector's reasons for objecting are as follows:

- The helipad does not conserve the area;
- The helipad causes noise pollution;
- The helipad causes a danger to users of the A39;
- The helipad causes a danger and harms the enjoyment of users of the public rights of way in the area, including the Coleridge Way;
- The helipad is located near to a Special Area of Conservation and a Site of Special Scientific Interest; and
- The flying of private helicopters fails to contribute to the reduction of a carbon emissions.

The other member of the public has questioned whether the comments in the application papers in relation to satisfying aviation regulations are correct and whether there is sufficient justification for the construction of a permanent concrete pad for helicopters.

A second letter from the same member of the public has questioned whether the applicant's comments in relation to potential fuel spillage from helicopters is also correct.

Policy Context

Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031

GP1 – General Policy: Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development

CE-S1 – Landscape and Seascape Character

CE-D1 – Protecting Exmoor's Landscapes and Seascapes

CE-S2 – Protecting Exmoor's Dark Night Sky

CE-S3 – Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

CE-S6 – Design and Sustainable Construction Principles

CC-S1 – Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

CC-S7 – Pollution

RT-D10 – Recreational Development

RT-D12 – Access Land and Rights of Way

AC-D2 – Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material planning consideration.

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Planning Considerations

The main material planning considerations in this case are the principle of development and the impact on the landscape, neighbouring amenity, wildlife, the public rights of way network, highway safety and the environment from potential pollution.

Principle of Development

The primary purpose of the helipad is to serve the shooting estate at Lillycombe. As the helipad is used in association with an outdoor recreational activity, it is considered to be appropriate to judge the principle of the development under the recreational development policy, Policy RT-D10 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031. This policy states that proposals for recreational development that support a sustainable local economy will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that, individually and cumulatively:

- a) they reuse traditional buildings and where appropriate non-traditional buildings. Where the need for a new building is clearly demonstrated siting should be well related to existing buildings;
- b) the location together with scale, and intensity of use or activity (including seasonal impacts) is appropriate in relation to the historic environment, wildlife sensitivity, landscape character, visual amenity and existing enjoyment of the area;
- c) it is in or adjoining a named settlement (Policy GP3);
- d) where they cannot be accommodated in a named settlement, the development will enhance the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park, and it can be clearly demonstrated that such a location is essential for development;
- e) there is adequate access, including by sustainable modes of transport;
- f) parking can be accommodated unobtrusively and the existing local road network has capacity to service the development (Policy AC-S3); and
- g) the development will be removed and land restored to its former condition when the building/structure becomes redundant unless planning permission is granted for an alternative use. Environmental enhancement will be encouraged when the land is restored.

Lillycombe is located in the open countryside and is not in or adjoining a named settlement. As such, it needs to be demonstrated that the development cannot be located in a named settlement and that such a location is essential for development.

The application papers confirm that the site is flat. The papers go on to explain guests of the shooting estate sometimes wish to travel by helicopter and that the landing, parking and taking off by a helicopter requires a solid pad. It is also asserted that the aviation regulations require unattended helicopters to be lashed down to ensure that they remain static and fixed during high winds. The applicant has therefore provided a solid pad rather than a temporary moveable helipad.

7.4

As mentioned earlier in this report, a member of the public who has identified themselves as a former helicopter pilot has questioned whether the installation of a concrete pad to satisfy aviation regulations is actually correct.

Officers' attention has been drawn to the document 'Civil Helicopters in The Community', which makes special reference to National Parks. The member of the public has also drawn attention to 'The Simple Guide for Setting up an Unlicensed Heli-site' and 'The Heli-Site Keepers Guide'.

The member of the public asserts that there is no risk of a parked helicopter being blown over and that there is *no requirement (or even a recommendation) to provide on-shore helipads with tie down points for the helicopter (other than on rooftops)*. He has forwarded an e-mail from Tim Fauchon, the CEO of the British Helicopter Association. This email is set out in full in the Consultee Representations section of this report. This email seems to confirm that there is no requirement to have tie down rings built into an inshore helicopter pad. The email's conclusion is as follows:

The long and short of it is that there is no publication which mentions lashing down of helicopters produced by the CAA. This advice tends to be found in aircraft operating manuals and then it will give wind speeds at which an aircraft should be lashed down. For something like a top heavy Puma this will included lashing it to the ground to stop it being blown over.

Officers are essentially left with cases for and against a permanent concrete pad for helicopters. It was noted that when the site was visited in March 2020 there appeared to be no tie down points present on the concrete pad itself. The comments made by the member of the public and the forwarded comments of the CEO of the British Helicopter Association does call into question the need for the provision of a concrete pad if the main justification is that it is required to allow helicopters to be lashed down to the ground.

Notwithstanding this, the applicant also seeks to justify the installation of the pad on the basis that it would also be used for emergency purposes. The application papers explain that Lillycombe's remote setting means that the ability for an air ambulance to land at the property following an accident on the estate is important in allowing the estate to continue to operate to the highest health and safety standards possible. It is asserted that the pad provides a safe and secure site for helicopters with a known grid reference and this is imperative in maintaining high health and safety protocols. It is also suggested that the helipad could also be available for the air ambulance to attend incidents beyond the estate.

Officers acknowledge that accidents can happen whilst carrying out country pursuits and that shooting activities can result in accidents from using guns or traversing along rough terrain. The applicant has identified the provision of the concrete pad as helping with health and safety, this is not considered as a necessity and therefore Officers give limited weight in the decision-making process to this.

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It is Officers' understanding that Emergency Services do not require a formal concrete pad to land and therefore while there would may be some benefit in having the pad in place, it would not appear to be not necessary for emergency service delivery and no evidence has been submitted to support a need for such facility to service the emergency services.

In accordance with Policy RT-D10, because the site is located in open countryside and away from the built form of Lillycombe, the development is required to enhance the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park. The policy also requires that such a location is essential for the development.

In this case Officers do not consider that it can really be said that the development would "enhance" the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park. However, it is also acknowledged that it could be seen as supporting an existing recreational use and a business within the local community.

It is possible to see that a position away from the main building group may be necessary to allow clear space for a helicopter to land, and that could be seen as contributing to a need for a position away from the main building group.

In accordance with Policy RT-D10 the acceptability of the proposed development in principle is not clearly established, particularly because the development would not "enhance" the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park.

The following sections of the report considers the potential impact of the development on public rights of way, highway safety, the landscape, neighbouring amenity, wildlife and the environment.

Impact on Public Rights of Way Network

As detailed earlier in this report, the helipad has been constructed on the eastern edge of an agricultural field. A public footpath (ref. WL 17/8) runs along the eastern boundary of the field and it is approximately 15 metres from the helipad. This footpath is part of the Coleridge Way, a nationally recognised and key walking route across the National Park. The close proximity has drawn objections from the Authority's Public Rights of Way Officer, the Local Access Forum, the Exmoor Society, the West Somerset & Exmoor Bridleway Association and the Somerset Ramblers.

Concerns have also been raised in relation to the distance of the helipad from a public bridleway (ref. WL17/11), which is located approximately 550 metres to the west.

Policy RT-D12 of the Local Plan relates to public rights of way and it states that the access network will be safeguarded by ensuring that development proposals will not adversely affect:

- a) the condition of the access network;

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- b) users' interests; and
 - c) character and appearance.

Clearly the helipad has been constructed very close to a public footpath that forms a part of an important and well used walking route in the National Park.

It is recognised that a helicopter pilot would typically check for hazards before landing but the landing and taking off of a helicopter is still going to interrupt and harm the tranquil and peaceful setting of the footpath and people's enjoyment of this undeveloped part of the National Park. This can be a result of people being scared or surprised by the noise of the helicopter (particular children and dogs) and/or the interruption of one's perambulation from having to wait for a helicopter to land or take off.

Officers also consider that to construct a helipad so close to a public footpath significantly increases the potential for danger to life, particularly from the downdraft of the helicopter blades. In fact, as the helipad is not overtly visible from further along this section of footpath means that the sound of an approaching helicopter may not be able to prevent users of the footpath from walking along the footpath towards the helipad as it is not clear that the helicopter is going to land next to the footpath. Most people walking in the countryside would expect a helicopter to land more than 15 metres away from a footpath.

Objections to this application also make reference to the harmful and potentially dangerous impact on the bridleway to the west of the helipad. Officers note that it is located approximately 550 metres away from the helipad, but the West Somerset & Exmoor Bridleway Association and the Somerset Ramblers have made comments on the impact of this development on the bridleway and they have confirmed that their comments are endorsed by the British Horse Society. They have commented that before a helicopter lands it is routine practise for a pilot to carry out a low and circling swoop around the helipad to check for any hazards and this circling would be directly over the bridleway. The comment regarding carrying out a circling check of the area is reiterated by the previously mentioned member of the public who confirms that he is a former helicopter pilot.

The British Helicopter Association advises that *if possible helicopters should be able to take-off and make their approach into wind*. Taking this advice and that the prevailing wind in the UK is from the south west or west, this would potentially mean that helicopters would be taking off from the helipad in the direction of the bridleway.

The flying of helicopters away from the helipad towards the bridleway or the circling of helicopters in the area judging whether it is safe to land has the increased potential for horses to be spooked and the amenity of the bridleway to be harmed.

It is noted that the application papers appear to be silent on the impact on the public rights of way network and the submitted plans appear to not show the location of the

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footpath in particular. It is also noted that a more recent email from the applicant's agent did not seek to address the concerns raised during the consultation process relating to the impact of the development on the public rights of way network.

The impact of a helipad approximately 15 metres from a footpath, especially a footpath that forms part of a nationally known walking route (the Coleridge Way, is considered to cause danger to life at the very most and a severe impact on the character of the footpath and the users interests at the very least. It's very visible presence so close to the footpath also means that it impacts negatively on the immediate setting of the footpath where users would expect its setting to be development free. There is also the potentially harmful impact on the bridleway located to the west that needs to be taken into account as well. Overall, it is considered that the retention of the helipad would be contrary to Policy RT-D12 of the Local Plan. It would also conflict with Policy GP1 of the Local Plan.

It is noted by Officers that the number of flights would be limited to eight during the shooting season and that no flights would take place outside this period. However, the landing of just one helicopter in such close proximity to the footpath causes severe harm to the users of the footpath. The preferable situation would be to land helicopters away from the public rights of way network and the limit on the number of flights is not considered to mitigate against the harm to the public rights of way network.

Officers have also had regard to the 28 days of permitted use for land to be used for temporary purposes without planning permission. However, there are two issues with this argument. Firstly, if the landing and taking off of helicopters is seen as a separate activity to the shooting that takes place on the estate, then it is likely that the 28 days would be used up by shooting activities given the size of the commercial operation and this would not leave available days for the helicopter use. Secondly, the 28 days of permitted use would allow helicopters to land on any field within the estate and the helipad only serves in this respect to encourage or even force helicopters to land in close proximity to a public footpath.

Impact on Highway Safety

The Highway Authority (Somerset County Council) have objected to this application and they have referred to the comments they made on the previous planning application for the retention of the helipad (ref. 6/25/20/102) that was withdrawn earlier this year.

Their previous comments drew attention to the distance of the helipad to the A39, a key arterial road through the National Park. The distance from the helipad to the A39 is approximately 40 metres. The Highway Authority have acknowledged that most types of helicopters can accept some cross wind component, but they have reiterated the advice of the British Helicopter Association that it is preferable for helicopters to land and take off into the wind. This means that the helicopters using the pad are potentially going to fly at a low height over the A39, particularly when landing into the

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prevailing wind. As such, the Highway Authority have advised that this would bring them into conflict with vehicles on the A39, especially HGVs, busses and coaches, and will increase the risk of collisions.

The Highway Authority recommends this application be refused on the grounds of highway safety.

Clause 2 of Policy AC-D2 of the Local Plan states that development which will cause unacceptable levels of traffic in terms of the environmental or physical capacity of the local road network, or would prejudice road safety interests, will not be permitted.

Having regard to the Highway Authority's comments, it is considered that the retention of the helipad would prejudice road safety interests, even if its use is limited to only 8 flights during the shooting season the risk associated with helicopters potentially flying at low level across one of the main roads across Exmoor is unacceptable.

The development is therefore contrary to Policy AC-D2 of the Local Plan and it is also contrary to Paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Impact on the Landscape

The helipad is located within an agricultural field and is consists of a 6 metres by 6 metres square of concrete. The pad is very visible from the public footpath and has an immediate impact on the enjoyment of the local environment by users of the footpath. However, it does not mean that the impact on the wider landscape is materially harmful. The helipad is relatively flush with the grass surface of the field and as the site is flat, no engineering operation to cut into adjacent ground level. From wider viewpoints, including from the A39, the helipad is not overtly visible. Officers consider that there has been a change in character, but this is seen in the context of the hard surface of the nearby drive. Given the relatively minor views of the site from the wider area and that its visual impact is restricted to a small area of the field, Officers consider on balance that material harm to the character and appearance of the landscape has not occurred.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

There are no residential properties near the application site. Broomstreet Farm is approximately 0.9km to the north, Yarnor Moor Lodge (in the applicant's ownership) is approximately 1.25km to the east and Rawford Farm and properties at Oareford are a similar distance to the south west. These are significant distances and helicopters may fly over these properties anyway whether there is a pad at Lillycombe or not. It is considered that their separation from the actual development site, where the Local Planning Authority have control in this case, is significant enough to prevent neighbouring harm from the landing and taking off of helicopters from the pad.

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If Members are minded to approve the application, then the British Helicopter Association guidelines stating that operations prior to 7am and after 6pm are to be avoided when flying over National Parks should be taken and formed into a condition restricting landing and taking off from the pad outside 7am to 6pm. The BHA guidelines also state that no flights should take place on Christmas Day and this could be worked into the same condition. Officers consider that such a condition would prevent harm to neighbouring amenity as a result of helicopter flying associated with the pad during anti-social hours.

Impact on Wildlife

As explained earlier in this report, the applicant has confirmed in the application papers that there would be a maximum number of 8 helicopter flights to and from the pad. It is also confirmed that the pad would only be used between 1st September and 30th January. Natural England have provided a consultation response based on these details.

Natural England has advised they have no objections to the retention of the helipad, subject to the attachment of a condition restricting the use of the helipad to no more than 8 flights between September and January and no flights outside this period. With the attachment of such a restriction, they have concluded that the development is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact on the Exmoor Heaths Special Area of Conservation and the North Exmoor Site of Special Scientific Interest, which are located approximately 200 metres from the application site.

Natural England have also advised that as the Competent Authority, Exmoor National Park Authority is required to conduct a Habitat Regulations screening to determine the significance of impacts on European sites and the scope for mitigation and to demonstrate that the requirements of Regulations 63 and 64 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 have been considered.

The Authority's Wildlife Officer has carried out a Habitat Regulations Assessment and this is publicly viewable on the Authority's planning website. The SAC is primarily designated due to it containing northern Atlantic wet heath with *Erica tetralix* and European dry heaths.

The HRA acknowledges that no ecological survey has been undertaken as part of the application but from reviewing the aerial photography and Street View images, it can be seen that the site prior to the construction of the helipad was laid to improved pasture and grazed by sheep.

It is stated in the HRA that Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site, and Annex I habitats present as qualifying features, may be affected through increase in emissions leading to risk of air quality impacts on the SAC. In the absence of appropriate avoidance or reduction measures the SAC may experience increased nutrient deposition from air quality impacts, thus impacting the soil chemical composition, allowing dominant and invasive plants to outcompete with the flora

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associated with the Annex I habitats. Further impacts may arise due to risk of changing the soil pH, rendering the substrate sub-optimal and/or unsuitable for the Annex I habitat types.

The HRA concludes that based on the details regarding level and time of use of the helipad, the development is unlikely to damage or destroy the interest features for which the SAC and SSSI have been notified. Provided this restriction in use are included in a condition, it is considered that the development would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC.

The Wildlife Officer has also recommended that a condition is attached that requires ecological enhancement measures to be carried out as part of the retention of the helipad. This is to ensure that there is biodiversity net gain in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Impact on the Environment

The Environment Agency have also commented on this application and they initially raised a concern with the development. Their formal comments draw attention to the presence of a spring near to the application. The concern raised revolved around the pollution issues that could arise from chemical or fuel spillage from the helipad running down the access drive towards the spring. They have recommended that suitable pollution prevention equipment such as spill kits should be either stored at the helipad or made available close by during landing, take off, maintenance and any refuelling activities in case of leaks or spillages from the helicopter.

A response to the Environment Agency was provided by the applicant's agent. The response has asserted that the helipad is situated 240 metres north west of the spring, which runs due south down Lillycombe Combe. It is explained that the pad is located on *the flattest part of the field in permanent pasture which is never ploughed*. It is further asserted that the gradient of the field where the helipad is located is low and that it does not slope towards the access drive. It has also been stated that the type of helicopter landing on the pad would be single or two seaters and that they would be carrying minimal fuel loads compared to larger helicopters.

Following the submission of this response by the applicant's agent, the Environment Agency reconsidered their position and advised that they no longer had an objection to the retention of the helipad. The reason for the change in position is that the details provided satisfied their concerns regarding pollution risk to the spring. They have based this response on the agent's comments that the field slopes away from the access drive and that potential pollution would run on to the field and not be directed to the drive.

A member of the public has queried the comments provided by the applicant's agent by questioning whether only single or two seater helicopter's would be used by guests to the estate and questioning the comments relating to fuel load.

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The thoughts of the member of the public aside, given the potential for a fuel spill and that it would not be impossible for it to trace its way on to the access track, Officers consider it sensible to suggest that should Members be minded to approve the application that a condition is attached that requires infrastructure to be installed on the edge of the pad within a reasonable time period to ensure that spills are trapped instead of running over the field or the access drive.

Other Matters

In May 2019 the UK government declared a climate emergency, Exmoor National Park followed this by declaring a Climate Emergency in October 2019. To help meet this challenge the Local plan includes policies which seek to influence, contribute and challenge development to help meet the Climate Emergency.

Policy GP1 of the Local Plan sets out that the need to consider future generations, through sustainability and resilience to climate change and adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Policy CC-S1 states that climate change mitigation will be encouraged, development which reduces demand for energy, using small scale low carbon and renewable energy, looks to situate development which avoids sites that would put wildlife at risk together with measures which avoids the risk of flooding.

Policy CC-S5 seeks to support small scale renewable energy schemes that assist in contributing towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and moving towards a carbon neutral National Park and Policy CE-S6 seeks to incorporate sustainable construction methods which future proof against climate change impacts, including flood risk.

Paragraph 148 of the National Planning Policy Framework prescribes that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

There has been an impact on the climate from laying down a concrete pad but this impact is considered to be negligible. There is also a climate impact from the use of the pad to land helicopters but this would be limited to eight flights a year. Officers consider that the impact on the climate resulting from the development is relatively minimal and a further reason for refusal should not be included on the grounds of climate impact.

Human Rights

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

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Conclusion

Whilst the impact on some material planning considerations, such as neighbouring amenity, wildlife and the landscape are not considered to be materially harmful, Officers have significant concerns over the impact of the development on the public rights of way network and the A39.

It is acknowledged by Officers that the development can be seen to support an existing recreational business that employs local people and forms part of the local economy, but the potential benefits from the development are considered to be minor in comparison with the level of harm to the public rights of way network and the A39.

The impact on the footpath, the bridleway to the west and the A39 is considered to be materially harmful and the application is contrary to Policies GP1, RT-D12 and AC-D2 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031, and the National Planning Policy Framework. The harm caused to the enjoyment of this area of the Park is also considered to call into doubt the compliance in principle with Policy RT-D10 through the retention of a helipad at this particular site.

As detailed in the report, Officers have had regard to the limited number of flights and the potential use of 28 days of permitted landing and taking off of helicopters without planning permission. However, as explained in the report, these factors are not considered to mitigate or reduce the harm to an acceptable level where it would be compliant with local and national planning policies.

Officers have also had regard to the applicant's suggestion that the helipad could be used for emergencies but as explained in the report, Officers have doubt that this provides justification to override concerns raised by numerous parties. In addition, there are no details provided to suggest that an air ambulance would not be able to land in the field without the helipad.

The application papers also make reference to a precedent set by the approval of a helipad for a commercial shoot that was approved by Somerset West and Taunton Council. The National Park Authority should determine each planning application on its own individual merits and the two cases are not directly comparable, particularly as one site is in the National Park and the other is outside. The approval of a helipad application by a neighbouring authority is not considered to make this application acceptable.

Officers are also not satisfied that there are conditions that would overcome, or mitigate against, the material harm to the public rights of way network and the A39. Taking all material considerations into account, on balance, Officers recommend that the application be refused for the reasons set out below.

Recommendation

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Refuse for the following reasons:

1. The helipad has been constructed approximately 15 metres from a public footpath, which also forms part of the Coleridge Way. The close proximity of the helipad to the footpath is considered to cause material harm to the character and setting of this section of public right of way and the landing and taking off of helicopters in the vicinity of the footpath is considered to cause material harm to users' interests and enjoyment. The movement and manoeuvring of helicopters associated with the helipad creates an increase for potential conflict with, and harm to, a public bridleway to the west of the application site. The proposed retention of the helipad is therefore contrary to Policies GP1, RT-S1, RT-D10 and RT-D12 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031, and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The helipad has been constructed approximately 40 metres from the A39, a key arterial road through the National Park. The proximity of the helipad to the public A road is considered to bring the increased potential for helicopters to manoeuvre over and/or in close proximity to the main road. This would bring helicopters using the helipad into direct conflict with vehicles using the road and/or cause a distraction that could result in an accident. The proposed retention of the helipad is therefore contrary to Policy AC-D2 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives

Positive and Proactive Statement

This Authority has a pro-active approach to the delivery of development. Early preapplication engagement is always encouraged. In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, in determining this application, Exmoor National Park Authority has endeavoured to work positively and proactively with the agent/applicant, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, to ensure that all relevant planning considerations have been appropriately addressed to achieve a positive outcome. In this case, the planning objections to the proposal could not be overcome.

Appeal to the Secretary of State

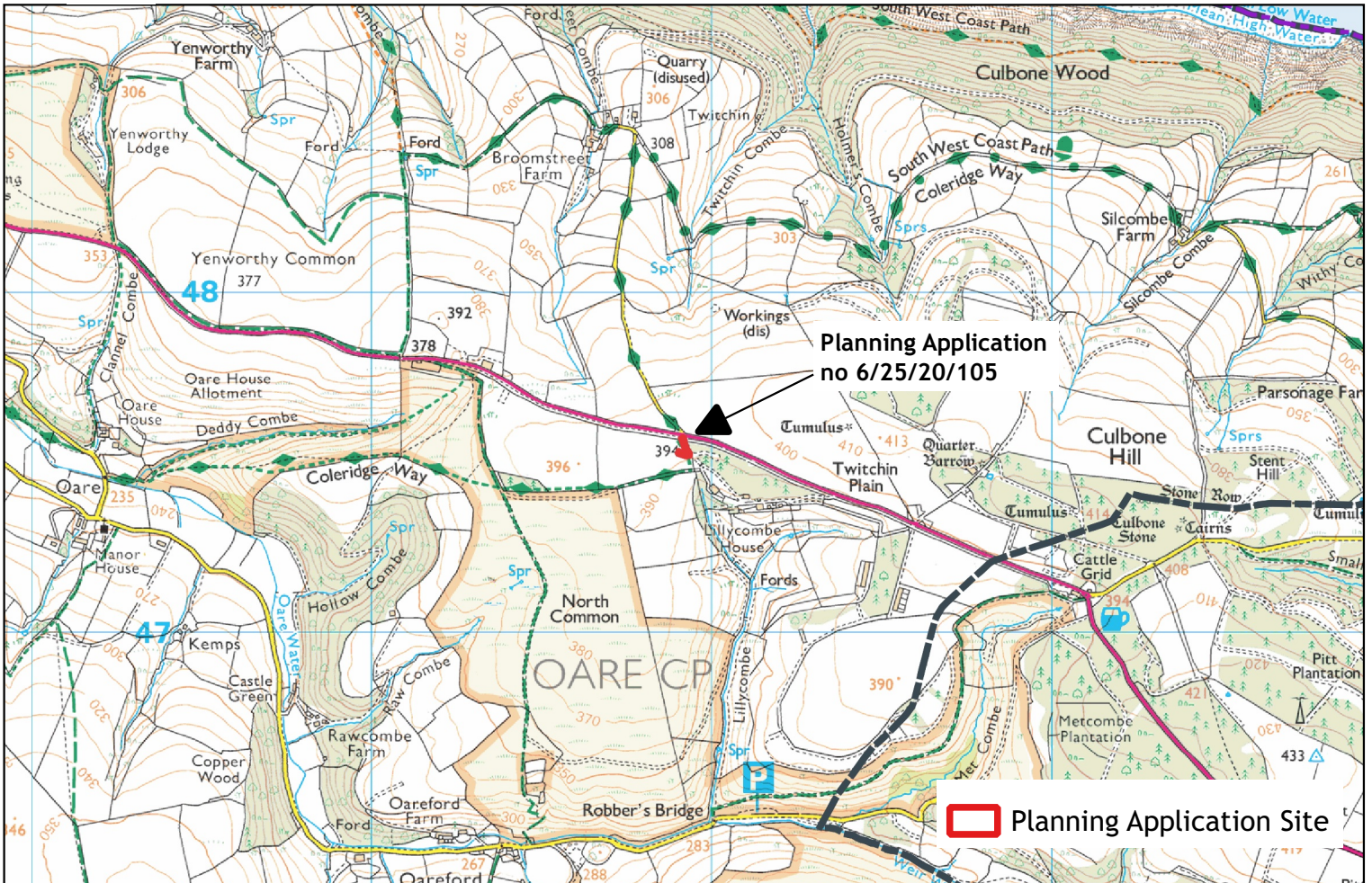
If you want to appeal against your Local Planning Authority's decision then you must do so within 6 months of the date of this notice.



Site Map

Scale 1:2500

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Overview Map

Scale 1:20000

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Committee Report

Application Number:	62/49/20/003
Registration Date:	11-Aug-2020
Determination Date:	01-Oct-2020
Applicant	Mr Roy Richards
Agent:	Mr D Webb, David Webb Architect
Case Officer:	Kieran Reeves
Site Address:	Mineswood, Heasley Mill, South Molton, EX36 3LE
Proposal:	Proposed change of use and conversion of former Methodist's chapel to 1 no. local needs dwelling and the construction of 1 no. local needs self-build dwelling, together with associated landscaping and hardstanding, and the extension of existing parking area.
Recommendation:	Refusal
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	North Molton Parish Council have a formal view on the application that is contrary to the recommendation of Officers

Relevant History

62/49/18/005 – Proposed change of use of former Methodist Church to two holiday lets together with associated works. Resubmission of withdrawn application ref.

62/49/17/004 – Refused on 2nd October 2019

62/49/17/004 – Proposed change of use of former Methodist Church to two holiday lets together with associated works – Withdrawn on 1st February 2018

62/49/08/001 – Conversion of redundant chapel to 1 no local needs affordable residential unit – Approved on 1st November 2011

Site Description & Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the conversion of the former Methodist chapel at Heasley Mill to a single residential dwelling. The former Methodist chapel (now known as Mineswood) is a single storey, stone and render building with a slate roof and a stone porch on the front elevation. It is understood to have stopped functioning as a chapel in December 2000 due to decreasing attendance. The site has no cemetery area and the boundaries are fairly tightly drawn around the building.

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There is currently a single width vehicular access up to the chapel from the lane in front of the site. The access is sloped due to the chapel being situated on higher ground level than the lane. There is parking and turning space in front of the building. The south west section of the building is an entrance hall with the rest of the building being the formal chapel area.

Planning permission is also sought for the erection of a self-build dwelling on the site of former miners' cottages. This site is on the opposite side of the vehicular entrance into the former Methodist chapel but is also in the ownership of the applicant. The former miners' cottages are in a ruined state and not much of the built fabric remains. They are understood to have served the mines that were located around Heasley Mill in the 19th Century. The proposal is to remove the ruins and erect the dwelling on the same site.

Planning permission was previously granted in November 2011 for the use of the former chapel as a local needs affordable dwelling (ref. 62/49/08/001). This permission was never implemented and expired in November 2014.

Planning permission was also refused in October 2019 for the conversion of the chapel to two self-catering holiday units. The Authority Committee refused the application for the following reasons:

- 1) The application site lies within the open countryside and does not form part of a farmstead. The proposed use of the former chapel as self-catering holiday accommodation does not comply with Policy RT-D4 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031 as it would not constitute the diversification of a rural-land based business within the National Park and therefore would not assist in the management and conservation of the landscape of the National Park.
- 2) The creation of a large area of hard standing at the site for off-road parking has been proposed to accommodate the number of parking spaces required to serve two units at this site. As such, the provision of two units and the associated parking area constitutes overdevelopment of the site that would lead to an erosion of the undeveloped character and appearance of the setting of this building within the countryside. These associated works are contrary to Policies GP1, CE-S1, CE-D1 and CE-S6 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The proposal now is to convert the chapel to a single dwelling that would be restricted to be occupied by local people only. As part of the conversion a first floor would be constructed along the entire length of the building. Externally, two flues and three rooflights would be installed within the north western roofslope. The only new opening in the external walls would be a new door in the north eastern elevation of the porch. The gross internal floor area would be approximately 172.7 square metres and this would provide four bedrooms.

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The proposed self-build dwelling would be two storey and would be finished externally in painted render under a natural slate roof. Windows are shown as powder coated aluminium and the doors are shown as painted timber. The gross internal floor area of this dwelling would be approximately 97.4 square metres and this would provide three bedrooms.

Landscaping works are also proposed, and this would include cutting back the bank between the former chapel and the ruined miners' cottages. This was also proposed as part of the refused planning application. A vehicle parking area for the self-build dwelling is also proposed by cutting back the bank. The two dwellings are proposed to be served by a new sewage package treatment plant.

Consultee Representations

North Devon Council – North Devon Council wishes to highlight the loss of the community facility and the resulting impact the development would have on the settlement hierarchy. The further loss of community facilities will potentially limit the provision of further development in the locality as the settlement will no longer be able to provide the appropriate amenities to support sustainable development.

North Devon Housing – Affordable housing policy (and the requirements for tenure, property size, allocation, etc.) is as per the Exmoor National Park Local Plan. Devon Home Choice shows there are 16 households living in the parish of North Molton registered as being in housing need as of January 2020. Not all households tend to register themselves on the housing register as they don't think that they will have the opportunity to be housed so this figure is often significantly higher. It should be noted that although DHC data identifies the number of households living within the parish in housing need – it does not always provide sufficient information to firmly establish how long households have been resident in the parish or if they wish to remain in the parish; it is a snap shot in time and people's circumstances can change extremely quickly. DHC captures data for households seeking rented accommodation. We don't hold data on demand figures for ownership options. A Housing Needs Survey for the parish of North Molton in July 2019 showed a need for 8 affordable dwellings within the next 5 years. Of the 8 affordable dwellings, 6 of the households in need required affordable housing for rent and 2 may be able to afford a low cost home ownership property. The affordable property size required was identified as 2 x 1 or 2 bedroom properties for singles/couples, 3 x 2 bedroom properties for families and 3 x 3 bedroom properties for families.

North Devon Environmental Health – I have reviewed this application in relation to Environmental Protection matters on behalf of North Devon Council's Environmental Protection service and comment as follows:

1. Construction Phase Impacts In order to ensure that nearby residents are not unreasonably affected by noise during the construction phase of the development I recommend the following condition be imposed: -

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Construction Hours Condition During the construction phase of the development, no machinery shall be operated and no noisy processes shall be undertaken outside the following times: a) Monday - Friday 08.00 - 18.00, b) Saturday 08.00 - 13.00 c) nor at any time on Sunday, Bank or Public holidays.

Reason: To protect the amenity of neighbouring residents.

2. Land Contamination I do not expect land contamination issues to arise in relation to the proposals. However, given the sensitivity of introducing a residential use, I recommend the following condition be imposed on any permission to cover the possibility that unexpected contamination is discovered during development work: -

Contaminated Land (Unexpected Contamination) Condition Should any contamination of ground or groundwater be discovered during development of the site, the Local Planning Authority shall be contacted immediately. Site activities within that sub-phase or part thereof shall be temporarily suspended until such time as a procedure for addressing the contamination is agreed upon with the Local Planning Authority or other regulating bodies.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination existing and exposed during the development is assessed and remediated as necessary.

3. Advisory Note: Foul Drainage The proposals include installation of a private system for treatment and disposal of foul drainage. The system, including any drainage field, will need to comply with building regulations and the Environment Agency's General Binding Rules for small sewage disposal systems.
4. Advisory Note: Asbestos The existing buildings are of an age where asbestos containing materials (ACMs) may have been used in their construction or subsequent modification. The buildings should be checked for ACMs by a competent person prior to any construction or conversion works commencing. Where ACMs are present they must be dealt with and where relevant be disposed of in accordance with asbestos regulations and health and safety guidance.

North Molton Parish Council – Support the planning application.

ENPA Wildlife Officer – Orbis Ecology undertook a series of bat roost surveys at Heasley Mill Chapel, Heasley Mil, South Molton, EX36 3LE during May/June/July 2016 and July/August 2019. The results of the surveys were as follows:

- Surveys conducted in 2015/16 confirmed the presence of day roosts of soprano pipistrelle bats *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and a transitional whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus* roost. The bats were observed emerging from a number of

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locations around the chapel including from under roof tiles and from behind bargeboards and fascias.

- Additional surveys were conducted in July and August 2019 to provide an update to the original surveys. A dusk and a pre-dawn survey confirmed a small soprano pipistrelle and long-eared bat day roost.
- There was no evidence of nesting bird activity.

From reviewing the plans, it is possible to see that the landscape plans and conversion of the former miner's cottage may impact nesting birds.

Recommendations

To comply with local and national policy, wildlife legislation, and the requirements of the mitigation hierarchy and for biodiversity net gain, please attach the following conditions to the planning permission if granted.

Bats

As bat roosts will be affected, and soprano pipistrelle, whiskered and brown long-eared bats potentially harmed the following is required to be conditioned in order that ENPA fulfils its legal duty of 'strict protection' of European protected species under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations 2017 (and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

- Works to the main house shall not in any circumstances commence unless the Local Planning Authority has been provided with either:
 - a) a copy of the licence issued by Natural England pursuant to Regulation 55 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 authorising the development to go ahead; or
 - b) a statement in writing from the licensed bat ecologist to the effect that he/she does not consider that the specified development will require a licence.

Reason: A pre-commencement condition in the interests of the strict protection of European protected species and in accordance with ENPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

The following condition is also required to ensure that the LPA fulfils its legal duty of strict protection of European protected species:

- Works will not commence until:
 - a) Construction operatives have been inducted by a licensed bat ecologist to make them aware of the possible presence of bats, their legal protection and of working practices to avoid harming bats. Written

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confirmation of the induction will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority by the licensed bat ecologist within one week of the toolbox talk

- b) Two 1FF Schwegler bat box to provide a suitable alternative roosting location, to accommodate any discovered bat(s), will be hung on a suitable tree or building on or adjacent to the site at a minimum height of 4 metres as directed by a licensed bat ecologist. Any such box will be maintained in-situ thereafter. Photographs showing their installation will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority
- c) Works potentially affecting bats will then proceed under the supervision of the licensed bat ecologist

Reason: A pre-commencement condition in to ensure the strict protection of European protected species and in accordance with ENPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

- Long term mitigation, including crevice and open void roosting mitigation features, as recommended within the Bat Survey Report for Heasley Mill Chapel (Orbis Ecology, 2019), to be included in the refurbished building will be accommodated. Any areas that are accessible to bats must be lined with traditional black bitumen felt (type 1F) to avoid the risk of entanglement of bats. Modern roofing membranes will not be permitted in areas which are accessible to bats. [Any timbers that are to be retained and requiring remedial timber treatment should only be treated with 'bat friendly' chemicals (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bat-roosts-use-of-chemical-pest-control-products-and-timber-treatments-in-or-near-them>)]A scheme must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to work commencing on site. The roosts will be implemented in strict accordance with the agreed scheme and maintained for the exclusive use of bats thereafter.

Reason: A pre-commencement condition in the interests of the Favourable Conservation Status of populations of European protected species and in accordance with ENPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure.

Bats and lighting

Due to the presence of foraging and commuting habitats for bats, there will be no artificial lighting of the trees or boundary vegetation. If external lighting is proposed, please attach the following condition:

- Prior to occupation, a "lighting design for bats", following Guidance note 8 - bats and artificial lighting (ILP and BCT 2018), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The design shall show how and where external lighting will be installed (including through the provision of technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be

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lit will not disturb or prevent bats using their territory or having access to their resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the design, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the design. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of the 'Favourable Conservation Status' of populations of European protected species and in accordance with ENPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure.

Birds

In reference to the removal of vegetation to facilitate the scheme please attach the following condition:

- No removal of hedgerows, trees, shrubs, scrub and tall ruderal herbs shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared and provides written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority by the ecologist. In no circumstances should netting be used to exclude nesting birds.

Reason: In the interests of nesting wild birds and in accordance with policy NPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure.

Biodiversity Enhancement (Net Gain)

As enhancement and compensation measures, and in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), please apply the following conditions to any planning permission granted.

- The following will be integrated into the design of the buildings and site plans:
 - a) Two Vivara Pro Woodstone Nest Boxes (32mm hole version) or similar mounted between 1.5m and 3m high on the northerly facing aspect of trees and maintained thereafter.
 - b) Two Vivara Pro Barcelona Woodstone Bird Box (open front design) or similar mounted between 1.5m and 3m high on the northerly facing aspect of trees and maintained thereafter.
 - c) A bee brick built into the wall about 1 metre above ground level on the south or southeast elevation of the dwelling of the new miners building dwelling. Bee bricks encourage solitary bees which do not sting.

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- d) All new shrubs to include high nectar producing plants to encourage a range of invertebrates to the site, to provide continued foraging for bats. The shrubs must also appeal to night-flying moths which are a key food source for bats. The Royal Horticultural Society guide, "RHS Perfect for Pollinators, www.rhs.org.uk/perfectforpollinators" provides a list of suitable plants both native and non-native.

Photographs of the installed features will be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation.

Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework

Provided the above conditions are applied as worded, I have no objection to this application.

ENPA Historic Environment Officer – I much appreciate the facilitation of the site visit by the applicant, which greatly helped my understanding of the site. The proposals affect two historic assets recorded on Exmoor's Historic Environment Record, the Methodist Chapel (MEM23931) and the ruins of former miner's cottages within the historic settlement core of Heasley Mill (MEM23891). Both lie within the Bampfylde and New Florence Mines Principal Archaeological Landscape (No 45).

The Methodist Chapel is recorded as being built in 1867. If the conversion of the building is permitted I recommend that a historic building record is undertaken and that the following condition is applied:

Condition: Prior to the commencement of the works a scheme for the recording of the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall thereafter be implemented as approved unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority. This work should include a collation of any available information or old photographs providing information on the original fixtures and fittings and historic use of the Chapel.

Reason: To record the architectural and historic fabric of the building.

The proposed self-build dwelling is sited on the ruins of former miners cottages which are significant to Heasley Mill's industrial past. A row of presumed surviving miner's cottages in the hamlet, to the south, are designated as Listed Buildings (Exmoor Historic Environment Record MEM22697). I am grateful to the applicant for the information that the ruined cottages on the site of the application were reduced to single storey and converted into stables. The truncated ruins are now heavily overgrown with scrub. Historic photographs survive which show the cottages as a two storey terraced row and later as a single storey mono-pitched building in the second

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half of the twentieth century. Historic maps indicate that the cottages date to the second half of the 19th century and that they were likely to be built on a new site.

The ruins are regarded as locally important historic assets. Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031 policy 4.97 states: In considering applications likely to affect locally important assets, their significance and the desirability of their preservation will be assessed. Applicants will be required to provide adequate information to enable the National Park Authority to assess the significance of a site or feature. Harm to heritage assets of local importance should be avoided and development will only be permitted where the archaeological/historic interest is capable of being preserved in situ. Where, in exceptional circumstances, an application is approved which will result in the loss (wholly or in part) of heritage assets, then developers must record and make publicly available this information to advance understanding of the significance of the assets. However, the ability to record evidence of the assets will not be a factor in deciding whether loss of the asset should be permitted.

The National Planning Policy Framework states:

197. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

198. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

199. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

It is wholly exceptional for sites of this type to be demolished for redevelopment within the National Park. However, the ruins are in a declining state and not clearly visible. Given their location in the heart of the hamlet and their current condition and likely further deterioration, if the development of the site is supported by the authority and community I recommend that this is considered to be one of the rare circumstances when the site is fully recorded to allow the development to take place. It is recommended that any development of the site is in sympathy with the character of the original cottages and that historic fabric is retained where possible. The record should include the standing remains (to be undertaken after vegetation has been cleared) and excavation of the site to record fully the ground floor plan and related features such as floor surfaces and method of construction. If the application is approved I recommend that the following condition is applied:

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Condition: No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The condition will not be discharged until a final report has been submitted and the Local Planning Authority has agreed that it accords with the Written Scheme of Investigation.

Reason: To ensure that a full record of a locally significant historic asset is made prior to loss in accordance with paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and the supporting text in paragraph 4.97 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031.

South West Water – No comment to make.

Representations

No public representations have been received in relation to this application.

Policy Context

Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031

GP1 – General Policy: Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development

GP3 – General Policy: Spatial Strategy

GP4 – General Policy: The Efficient Use of Land and Buildings

GP5 – General Policy: Securing Planning Benefits - Planning Obligations

CE-S1 – Landscape and Seascape Character

CE-D1 – Protecting Exmoor’s Landscapes and Seascapes

CE-S2 – Protecting Exmoor’s Dark Night Sky

CE-S3 – Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

CE-S4 – Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment

CE-S5 – Principles for the Conversion or Structural Alteration of Existing Buildings

CE-S6 – Design and Sustainable Construction Principles

CC-S1 – Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

CC-S6 – Waste Management

CC-D5 – Sewerage Capacity and Sewage Disposal

HC-S1 – Housing

HC-S2 – A Balanced Local Housing Stock

HC-S3 – Local Occupancy Criteria for Affordable Housing

HC-D6 – Custom/Self Build Local Need Housing

HC-D7 – Conversions to Dwellings in the Open Countryside

HC-S6 – Local Commercial Services and Community Facilities

HC-D19 – Safeguarding Local Commercial Services and Community Facilities

AC-D2 – Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development

AC-S3 – Traffic Management and Parking

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AC-D3 – Parking Provision and Standards

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material planning consideration.

Planning Considerations

The main material planning considerations in this case are the principle of development, the design, scale and materials, and the impact on the landscape, historic environment, wildlife, highway safety and neighbouring amenity.

Principle of Development

The former use of the chapel was a public place of worship. Clause 7 of Policy HC-S6 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 states that *local commercial services and community facilities will be safeguarded in accordance with Policy HC-D19 (Safeguarding Local Commercial Services and Community Facilities)*.

Policy HC-D19 states that *proposals to change the use of a local commercial service or non-commercial community facility will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:*

- a) there is no longer a need for the specific service or facility by the community, including over the longer term; and*
- b) a need for other permitted uses or other services and facilities has been explored and is not required; or*
- c) a replacement service or facility accessible to the local community of at least equivalent standard is provided; or*
- d) in the case of local commercial services, they cannot be continued and made viable over the longer term.*

Clause (d) above is not relevant to the determination of this application as the chapel was not a local commercial service.

North Devon Council have highlighted the loss of the community facility and the resulting impact the development would have on the settlement hierarchy. They have commented that further loss of community facilities will potentially limit the provision of further development in the locality as the settlement will no longer be able to provide the appropriate amenities to support sustainable development.

The Local Planning Authority acknowledges the comments of the District Council, but is also noted that the chapel stopped functioning as a place of worship 20 years ago and Officers have not been made aware of a desire or asserted need to replace the place of worship in this remote hamlet. There is a Methodist church at North Molton and given the long period since the chapel stopped functioning as well as the more recent planning permission, which permitted its reuse as a local need affordable dwelling, the potential reuse of the building is considered acceptable in principle. This

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is to say, Officers are of the opinion that the need for a Methodist chapel is no longer needed by the community in the longer term, and there is no evidence to suggest that another Christian denomination would continue the use of the building as a place of worship. On this basis, the loss of the use of the chapel as a place of worship is considered to be compliant with Policy HC-D19 of the Local Plan.

Policy HC-D19 goes on to state that *where the tests for a change of use set out in clauses (a), (b) or (c) are met, favourable consideration will be given to changes of use which benefit the community and the local economy consistent with policies in the Local Plan.*

The Local Planning Authority acknowledges that the District Council would like to see the building retained for another community use, but given the site's relatively remote location and the limited number of residential properties that are near it, Officers cannot foresee an alternative community use for the building that would be viable other than a public hall, but there is already such a facility in the hamlet. It is also considered to be unlikely that the building would be viable as a shop or other commercial business.

Having come to the conclusion that the use of the building as another community use or for commercial purposes are unlikely to come forward, Officers note that the conversion of the building to a residential unit would be compliant, subject to the conversion scheme complying with the relevant housing policies of the Local Plan.

Policy GP3 of the Local Plan provides the settlement hierarchy for the National Park. Heasley Mill is not included in the list of named settlements. It is therefore designated as open countryside.

Policy HC-D7 permits in principle the conversion of existing non-residential buildings to dwellings where they are located in a hamlet or farmstead, and where they are restricted as local need affordable housing, Extended Family housing or housing to meet a proven functional need for rural workers.

A hamlet is defined in the Local Plan as *an established, closely grouped number of dwellings within a contiguous built form and separate from other named settlements.* Heasley Mill is considered to meet this definition and is regarded to be a hamlet for the purposes of the Local Plan policies.

Given that Heasley Mill is considered to constitute a hamlet, and that the former chapel is closely related to the group of residential properties that form Heasley Mill, the principle of converting the building to a dwelling is considered to be compliant in principle, subject to the building being tied as one of the types of dwellings set out above.

The applicant is proposing a dwelling in the former chapel that would be tied as housing for local people who are considered to be in housing needs. However, at the

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validation stage of the application the applicant made it clear that the term “affordable” was not to be included in the application description. The applicant has specifically stated to Officers in an email that the two proposed dwellings are “for local needs not for affordable local needs”. The applicant has not confirmed whether his definition of local needs is the same as the definition under the Local Plan.

On this basis, the lack of affordability conflicts with the requirements of the main housing policy, Policy HC-S1, which states that *the principal community identified need is for affordable housing with local occupancy ties. Exceptionally, new housing development will be permitted where it addresses an identified local housing need for:*

- a) ***Affordable homes that remain affordable in perpetuity and which will be occupied by local persons in proven housing need in accordance with the local occupancy definition in Policy HC-S3.***
- b) *Homes for rural workers in agriculture, forestry or other rural land based enterprises with a proven essential, functional need in accordance with Policy HC-D9 or to enable succession farming on established farm businesses in accordance with Policy HC-D10.*
- c) *An Extended Family dwelling, in accordance with Policy HC-D5, which will be occupied by local persons in perpetuity.*

With the applicant’s confirmation that the chapel conversion dwelling will not remain affordable in perpetuity, it is envisaged that there will be difficulties with agreeing a Section 106 legal agreement which would typically stipulate that the price of the dwelling, whether for rental or sale, would be reduced to an affordable level.

Officers consider that the proposed conversion of the chapel to a dwelling would not result in a dwelling that would remain affordable in perpetuity. Therefore, this part of the proposal is considered to be contrary in principle to the housing strategy of the Local Plan, particularly Policy HC-S1.

Turning to the other part of the proposed development, the proposed self-build dwelling, Policy HC-D6 relates specifically to custom/self-building local need housing in the National Park and it states that *exceptionally, new build including custom/self-build housing will be permitted where:*

- a) *it is in a named settlement or in a rural community in the open countryside (proposals in a named settlement will be determined in accordance with Policy HC-D2 (Conversions to Dwellings in Settlements), or Policy HC-D3 (New Build Dwellings in Settlements), as appropriate);*
- b) *the site is well related to existing buildings, any development is proportionate in scale and it would conserve or enhance the traditional pattern of the rural community, landscape character and the appearance of the site and its surroundings;*
- c) *there is a proven local need for the dwelling(s) which will meet an affordable local need, and the intended occupants meet the requirements of the local*

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need occupancy criteria which will be secured in perpetuity through a planning obligation in accordance with Policy HC-S3 (Local Occupancy Criteria for Affordable Housing); and

- d) *the dwelling(s) will be affordable by size and type to local people and will remain so in perpetuity in accordance with Policy HC-S2 (A Balanced Local Housing Stock).*

As mentioned earlier in this report, Heasley Mill is not a named settlement and it therefore falls to consider whether it is a “rural community”. Rural communities are defined in the Local Plan as *small rural communities which are not identified in the spatial strategy, but have an established, closely grouped number of dwellings within a contiguous built form, and are separate from other named settlements, and include service provision in the form of a shop, pub or community meeting place/hall*. There are over ten residential properties grouped together around a crossroad that form Heasley Mill. Amongst this group of residential properties is a public meeting hall. Officers have concluded that Heasley Mill meets the definition of a “rural community”.

Taking that Heasley Mill is a rural community and that the proposed site for the self-build dwelling borders a residential property that forms part of Heasley Mill, the principle of erecting the self-build dwelling would be compliant in principle with Policy HC-D6, subject to it being tied as local need affordable housing and other material planning considerations being satisfied.

As with the proposed conversion scheme, the applicant has confirmed that the self-build dwelling would be made available for local people (although it is not confirmed that the local occupancy criteria under Policy HC-S3 would be used by the applicant), but it has been made clear by the applicant that the dwelling will not be restricted as affordable.

In addition to the wording of Policy HC-S1, which states that *new housing development will be permitted where it addresses an identified local housing need for **affordable homes that remain affordable in perpetuity***, Policy HC-D6 specifically states that self-build dwellings must meet an **affordable local need**.

Having regard to the housing strategy of the Local Plan, the erection of a self-build dwelling that would not be kept affordable in perpetuity would not be compliant in principle with the Local Plan.

Gross Internal Floor Area of Dwellings

As set out earlier in this report, the proposed chapel conversion would lead to a dwelling with a gross internal floor area of approximately 172.7 square metres and the gross internal floor area of the proposed self-build dwelling would be approximately 97.4 square metres.

Policy HC-S2 of the Local Plan states that *for local need affordable dwellings, including custom/self-build (Policy HC-D6), accessible and adaptable housing for*

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Exmoor's communities (HC-D4), and Extended Family dwellings (HC-D5), the gross internal area will be 93 square metres or less.

Paragraph 6.68 advises that the National Park Authority will consider local need dwellings larger than 93 square metres floorspace only where they are controlled through a Registered Provider (including owner occupied dwellings controlled through a Registered Provider), and where the identified need is for a larger dwelling. Housing of a modest size including terraced and semi-detached houses and flats will be expected in the majority of cases. The only other exception to the 93 square metres floorspace would be where the proposal is for the conversion and change of use of an existing building to a dwelling and the existing building is larger than 93 square metres (but not large enough to accommodate more than one dwelling).

With no confirmation that a Registered Provider is interested in taking on the self-building dwelling, and taking into account that it is a new build and not a conversion, Officers can see no exception to the requirement for this proposed dwelling to have a gross internal floor area of 93 square metres or less.

In terms of the chapel conversion, this would be approximately 79.7 square metres larger than the floor area allowance under Policy HC-S2. Officers acknowledge that this element of the application proposal is a conversion of an existing building, but it should also be noted that the applicant previously applied for two dwellings in this building under planning application references 62/49/17/004 and 62/49/18/005. It is therefore considered that the building is capable of accommodating two dwellings of affordable size. This aside, Officers would rather that the conversion scheme is limited to one storey as this would respect the historic character of the building's single storey layout and would provide a single dwelling with a gross internal floor area of 96.5 square metres. This significantly smaller floor area could be considered compliant under Policy HC-S2, which having regard to the conversion exemption set out in the preamble.

Officers have acknowledged and had regard to the conversion scheme approved under planning application reference 62/49/08/001. This approved a single dwelling in the former chapel with an approximate gross internal floor area of 160 square metres. However, this was determined in 2011 under a previous Local Plan and the permission was not implemented and lapsed in November 2014. It certainly does not provide a material fallback position. As such, Officers have concluded that this historic permission is of little weight and consequence when considering the size of the dwelling proposed.

The gross internal floor areas of the chapel conversion and the self-build dwelling would exceed the 93 square metres allowance under Policy HC-S2 of the Local Plan. The proposed chapel conversion would be approximately 85.7% larger than the 93 square metres allowance. The self-build dwelling would be approximately 4.4 square metres larger than the floor area allowance but the preamble to the policy is clear that there are no exceptions to new build dwellings that are not managed by a Registered

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Provider. Officer conclude that the floor area of both dwellings is not compliant with the adopted Local Plan.

Conversion of Former Chapel

The application papers include a letter from a structural engineer and it confirms that the proposed works to the building are not expected to require any significant structural works to the existing building and will principle involve the restoration of the existing fabric. It is also confirmed that given the mass masonry construction and foundations on to the bedrock, the additional load from the first floor are expected to be easily accommodated.

Officers have no reason to disagree with the expert structural advice that has been provided by AR Engineers on 17th May 2020. As such, it is concluded that the building is capable of conversion without the need for rebuilding that could constitute the erection of a new building.

The submitted plans shows that the footprint of the building would be retained and it would not be extended or externally enlarged. There would be minimal new openings. A new door opening would be installed in the porch and three low profile rooflights would be installed in the roof slope facing towards the bank at the rear of the chapel. Subject to the new door being natural timber and the rooflights being conservation design and flush fitting, these new openings are not considered to cause material harm to the character and appearance of the building.

Two flues would also be installed in the rear facing roof slope. Subject to these being painted matt black, the installation of such small features on the more hidden roof slope of the building is also not considered to cause material harm.

The windows and doors currently in the building are natural timber and the roof is currently clad in natural slate. The application papers explain that any replacement units or works to the roof will use materials to match. This is considered to be appropriate to ensure a sympathetic conversion of the building.

Officers consider that with the attachment of the above mentioned conditions, the manner of the proposed conversion of former chapel to a dwelling, in terms of external works, is acceptable and compliant with the adopted Local Plan.

Design and Materials of Self-build Dwelling

The proposed self-build dwelling would be two storeys and externally it would be finished in painted render under a natural slate roof. The first floor would be partially within the roof space and would be served by wall dormers. This has helped to keep the height of the building and its massing and bulk to an acceptable level. The fenestration proportions and layout are also considered to give an acceptable appearance to the dwelling. As does the eaves and gable overhangs. The proportions and form of the dwelling, and its overall design, are considered to be in keeping with the local vernacular of residential properties in the local area.

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In terms of materials, the use of natural slate on the roof and painted render on the external walls would be compliant with Policy CE-S6's requirement for traditional construction materials. This would also be the case for the timber painted doors and fascias. However, Officers have concerns over the proposed use of aluminium to construct the windows given the wording of Policy CE-S6:

The materials and design elements of a new building or conversion of an existing building, should complement the local context through the use of traditional and natural sustainable building materials. The use of locally-sourced sustainable building materials will be encouraged.

Aluminium is not a traditional or naturally sustainable construction material. Officers acknowledge that the application site is not in a conservation area, but the proposed self-build dwelling is seeking to replicate a traditional form of dwelling and its siting would be in the setting of the former chapel. In order to reinforce a traditional appearance and finish, and to protect the historic setting of the chapel, the use of aluminium in this case is not considered to be appropriate or supported under Policy CE-S6. Officers would encourage natural timber to be used, as is proposed for the doors and fascias. The use of aluminium windows is considered to be contrary to Policy CE-S6 of the adopted Local Plan.

Impact on Historic Environment

The proposed conversion of the former chapel would see the traditional single storey internal layout of the building significantly altered to provide a modern two storey residence that would not resemble or reflect its historic use. However, Officers also acknowledge that these are internal works that are largely outside the control of the planning regime and at the very least the plans are showing the first floor above the historic and characterful chapel windows in the building, which means that the floor would not be seen cutting across these windows.

The Authority's Historic Environment Officer (HE) has confirmed that the chapel is recorded as being built in 1867. Its age, character and social history means that a recording of the building should take place and the HE Officer has recommended that a condition is attached that requires a recording to be carried out as works to convert the building progress.

The HE Officer has also commented on the proposal to remove the ruined miners' cottages. It is advised that these ruins are a significant part of Heasley Mill's industrial past. There is a row of presumed former miners' cottages to the south of the application site that are designated as a listed building. Historic mapping indicates that the miners' cottages at the application site were constructed in the second half of the 19th Century and there are photographs that shows them as a two storey terraced row, but they were reduced to single storey and mono-pitched in the second half of the 20th Century.

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The HE Officer has advised Officers that these ruins are regarded as locally important heritage assets but it is also acknowledged that they are not listed or scheduled. Taking the ruins as local heritage assets, Clause 6 of Policy SE-S4 states that *adverse impacts on locally important heritage assets and/or their settings should be avoided. Where proposals are likely to cause substantial harm to or loss of locally important assets, permission will only be granted in exceptional circumstances where the public benefit outweighs the asset's historic or archaeological interest, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. The features of interest should be preserved in situ, but where this is not justifiable or feasible, provision must be made for appropriate preservation by record.*

Officers consider, in this instance, that the provision of a dwelling on the site of the ruins that would provide accommodation for local people but would not be affordable in size or price would not provide sufficient public benefit to outweigh the harm from the complete loss of these ruins that are regarded to be local heritage assets. In accordance with Policy CE-S4, based on the proposal before Officers, it is concluded that the removal of the ruins cannot be supported.

If the proposal were for a local need affordable dwelling that is affordable in size and would be kept affordable in perpetuity, or if Members conclude that a local need dwelling that is not affordable provides sufficient public benefit to outweigh the harm arising from the removal of the ruins, then Officers would like it to be recorded that this is *one of the rare circumstances when the site is fully recorded to allow the development to take place.*

Impact on the Landscape

The previous planning application on this site (reference 62/49/18/005), which is was for the conversion of the chapel to two holiday lets, was refused on two grounds and one of those grounds was the impact on the landscape.

The creation of a large area of hard standing at the site for off-road parking has been proposed to accommodate the number of parking spaces required to serve two units at this site. As such, the provision of two units and the associated parking area constitutes overdevelopment of the site that would lead to an erosion of the undeveloped character and appearance of the setting of this building within the open countryside. These associated work are contrary to Policies GP1, CE-S1, CE-D1 and CE-S6 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 - 2031 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

This current application proposes the same amount of hard standing for off-road parking. The proposal remains to cut this area back towards the field that is situated on higher ground level to the chapel on its north western boundary. This would allow a larger off-road parking area for the two proposed dwellings. The loss of part of the undeveloped nature of the setting of the chapel would cause material harm to the character and appearance of its setting. It would be replaced with a large engineered area of hard standing that would be finished in Type 2 scalplings.

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The level of harm from these works needs to be weighed against the potential public benefit of the scheme. With the previous application it was concluded that the provision of two holiday lets that did not comply in principle with the Local Plan would provide little public benefit. This current application is also considered to not be compliant in principle with the Local Plan on the basis that the two dwellings would not be affordable. As such, Officers consider that the level of public benefit arising from the proposed development would not be such that the harm to the landscape from these significant works would be outweighed.

Although the chapel conversion and the erection of the self-build dwelling are not considered to cause material harm to the character and appearance of the landscape, these proposed landscaping works would mean that the application is contrary to Policies CE-S1 and CE-D1 of the Local Plan, unless the public benefit arising from the proposed development is sufficient to on balance outweigh the harm.

Impact on Wildlife

It is confirmed that Orbis Ecology carried out bat roost surveys of the former chapel in 2015/2016 and again in July/August 2019.

The results of the 2015/2016 surveys confirmed the presence of day roosts of soprano pipistrelle bats and a transitional whiskered bat. They were observed emerging from a number of locations including from under roof tiles and from behind bargeboards and fascias. The surveys in 2019 confirmed small soprano pipistrelle and long-eared bat day roost.

The Authority's Wildlife Officer has considered the survey results and concluded that bat roosts will be affected, and soprano pipistrelle, whiskered and brown long-eared bats potentially harmed. As such, a suite of bat conditions are recommended that include requirement to submit to the Local Planning Authority a copy of a bat licence from Natural England, a requirement to carry out mitigation measures and a requirement to submit an external lighting scheme prior to installation of any such lighting. These conditions are recommended to ensure that the favourable conservation status of a protected species is conserved.

The Orbis Ecology report advises that there was no evidence of nesting bird activity in the chapel. However, the Wildlife Officer has advised that works to remove the ruins would potentially impact on nesting birds. As such, a condition is recommended that restricts works to outside the bird nesting season.

The Wildlife Officer has also recommended a condition that would require ecological enhancement measures to be carried out as part of the proposed development. This is to ensure that the development contributes to biodiversity net gain as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the upcoming Environment Bill.

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Officers consider that with the attachment of the recommended conditions the proposed development would not cause material harm to wildlife interests on site and the favourable conservation status of bats would be conserved.

Impact on Highway Safety

Officers raised highway safety concerns under the previous application on this site for two dwellings, albeit for two holiday let dwellings. The impact on highway safety formed a reason for refusal but Members voted to remove the reason for refusal as they considered there not to be a sufficient impact to warrant a refusal on these grounds. The proposal essentially remains for two dwellings to be provided on this site and without a comment from the Highway Authority objecting to the proposed development, Officers have concluded that highway safety impact will not form a reason for refusal based on the judgement of Members from a year ago.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

The proposed conversion of the former chapel would not see an increase in the massing and bulk of the building. The proposed rooflights would face towards agricultural land, not residential properties. As such, the proposed conversion is not considered to cause material harm to neighbouring amenity as a result of overlooking, overbearing or loss of light.

The proposed self-build would be erected closer to residential properties than the site of the former chapel. However, it would be sited a sufficient distance from the nearest property, Heasley Heights, to not cause an issue from overbearing or loss of light. There would be no windows facing towards this neighbouring property and so it is considered that there would not be an overlooking impact. The proposed erection of the self-build dwelling is not considered to cause material harm to neighbouring amenity.

Other Matters

Policy CC-D5 of the Local Plan states that development should connect to a public mains sewer, where available and physically possible. Where this is not the case, proposals for non-mains sewerage should first consider a combined sewage treatment system, or if this is not feasible, a system incorporating septic tank(s). Proposals which require non-mains sewerage must demonstrate that the proposal cannot be connected to a public mains sewer.

The proposed dwellings would be served by a new sewage package treatment plant. Heasley Mill is located in an isolated position within the open countryside and it is understood that it is not served by a public mains sewer. Officers consider that it would not be possible to bring a mains sewer connection to the site. As such, an alternative way to dispose of foul water would be acceptable under Policy CC-D5. In the hierarchy of alternative sewage disposal, a sewage package treatment system is considered to be the preferable option. It is concluded that the installation of a sewage treatment system to serve the two proposed dwellings complies with Policy CC-D5 of the Local Plan.

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In May 2019 the UK government declared a climate emergency, Exmoor National Park followed this by declaring a Climate Emergency in October 2019. To help meet this challenge the Local plan includes policies which seek to influence, contribute and challenge development to help meet the Climate Emergency.

Policy GP1 of the Local Plan sets out that the need to consider future generations, through sustainability and resilience to climate change and adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Policy CC-S1 states that climate change mitigation will be encouraged, development which reduces demand for energy, using small scale low carbon and renewable energy, looks to situate development which avoids sites that would put wildlife at risk together with measures which avoids the risk of flooding.

Policy CC-S5 seeks to support small scale renewable energy schemes that assist in contributing towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and moving towards a carbon neutral National Park and Policy CE-S6 seeks to incorporate sustainable construction methods which future proof against climate change impacts, including flood risk.

Paragraph 148 of the National Planning Policy Framework prescribes that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

There would be an impact on the climate from the works to former chapel and the erection of the self-build dwelling, and the sourcing of construction materials, but it is noted that the works would utilise sustainable construction materials, apart from the aluminium windows in the self-build dwelling. It is considered that there would negligible material impact on the climate from the development going forward. Officers consider that the impact on the climate resulting from the proposed development would not be such that the application should be refused.

Human Rights

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

Conclusion

The principle of erecting a self-build dwelling and the conversion of the former chapel to a dwelling are considered to be acceptable but this is subject to them meeting a local need and being affordable in terms of rental or sale price. The applicant has confirmed with Officers that the proposed dwellings would not be affordable and the gross internal floor areas of the dwellings exceed the 93 square metres allowance for

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local need dwellings set out under Policy HC-S2. On this basis, the proposed development is considered to be contrary in principle to the housing strategy of the adopted development plan and the floor area requirements for new dwellings in the National Park.

Officers have also identified harm to the historic environment from the loss of the former miners' cottages ruins and harm to the landscape from the creation of a substantial parking area cut into the natural landform. As the two dwellings would not be affordable and are contrary to the Local Plan housing strategy, the level of public benefit that would arise from the proposed development would not be sufficient enough to outweigh the harm to the historic environment or the landscape.

The report sets out the use of aluminium for the construction of the windows in the self-build dwelling is not considered to be an appropriate or policy compliant when taking into account that the proposed dwelling seeks to replicate traditional form and it would be sited within the setting of an important historic building with timber windows.

The design and materials of the proposed development, with the exception of the windows in the self-build dwelling, and the impact on wildlife, highway safety and neighbouring amenity are considered to be acceptable and policy compliant. However, the acceptable and complaint nature of other material planning considerations does not mitigate the issues identified above.

Overall, the proposed development is contrary to local and national planning policy and Officers therefore recommend that planning permission be refused for the reasons set out below.

Recommendation

Refuse for the following reasons:

1. Policy HC-S2 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 clearly sets a gross internal floor area of 93 square metres. The proposed chapel conversion and the self-build dwelling would have gross internal floor areas that would be in excess of this floor area allowance. This means that the size of the dwellings would not be affordable, and when taking into account that the applicant has confirmed that the dwellings would not be affordable in accordance with the requirements of the Local Plan, the proposed dwellings would not remain affordable in perpetuity. This is contrary to the Exmoor National Park housing strategy and would be contrary to Policies GP1, HC-S1, HC-S2, HC-D6 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The creation of a large area of hard standing at the site for off-road parking has been proposed to accommodate the number of parking spaces required to serve two units at this site. These works would lead to an erosion of the

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undeveloped character and appearance of the setting of this building within the open countryside. These associated work are not considered to be outweighed by public benefit and therefore are contrary to Policies GP1, CE-S1, CE-D1 and CE-S6 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 - 2031 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. The ruins of the former miners' cottages are considered to be a locally important historic asset. Policy CE-S4 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 sets out that adverse impacts on locally important heritage assets should be avoided and where proposals are likely to cause loss of locally important assets, permission will only be granted in exceptional circumstances where the public benefit outweighs the asset's historic or archaeological interest, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. The public benefit of providing two dwellings that would meet a local need but would not be affordable in perpetuity would not provide a sufficient level of public benefit to outweigh the harm resulting from the loss of the asset. Therefore there are not exceptional circumstances and the application is contrary to Policies GP1 and CE-S4 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 - 2031 and the National Planning Policy Framework.
4. The use of a non-traditional and non-sustainable material (aluminium) for the construction of the windows in the proposed self-build dwelling would not be compliant with the requirement of Policy CE-S6 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 for construction materials to be traditional and naturally sustainable. The Local Planning Authority cannot see a case to deviate from this policy of the adopted development plan.
5. In the absence of a Section 106 Agreement there is no secure means to ensure that the occupancy of the proposed local needs affordable dwellings are confined to persons who meet the occupancy criteria of Policy HC-S3 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 and is, therefore, contrary to said policy and Policy GP5 of the adopted Local Plan.

Informatives

Positive and Proactive Statement

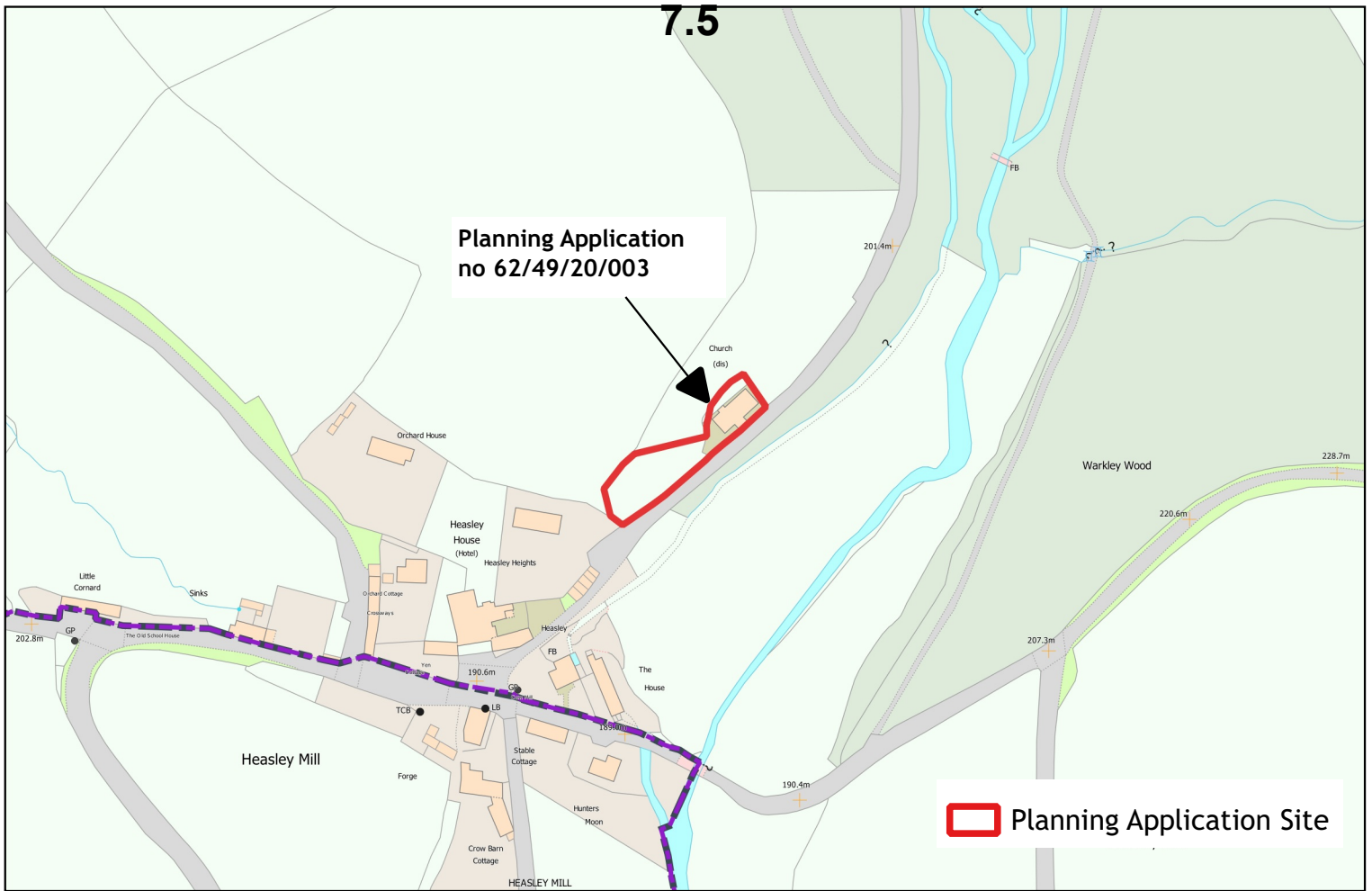
This Authority has a pro-active approach to the delivery of development. Early preapplication engagement is always encouraged. In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, in determining this application, Exmoor National Park Authority has endeavoured to work positively and proactively with the agent/applicant, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, to ensure that all relevant planning considerations have been appropriately addressed to achieve a positive outcome. In this case, the planning objections to the proposal could not be overcome.

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Appeal to the Secretary of State

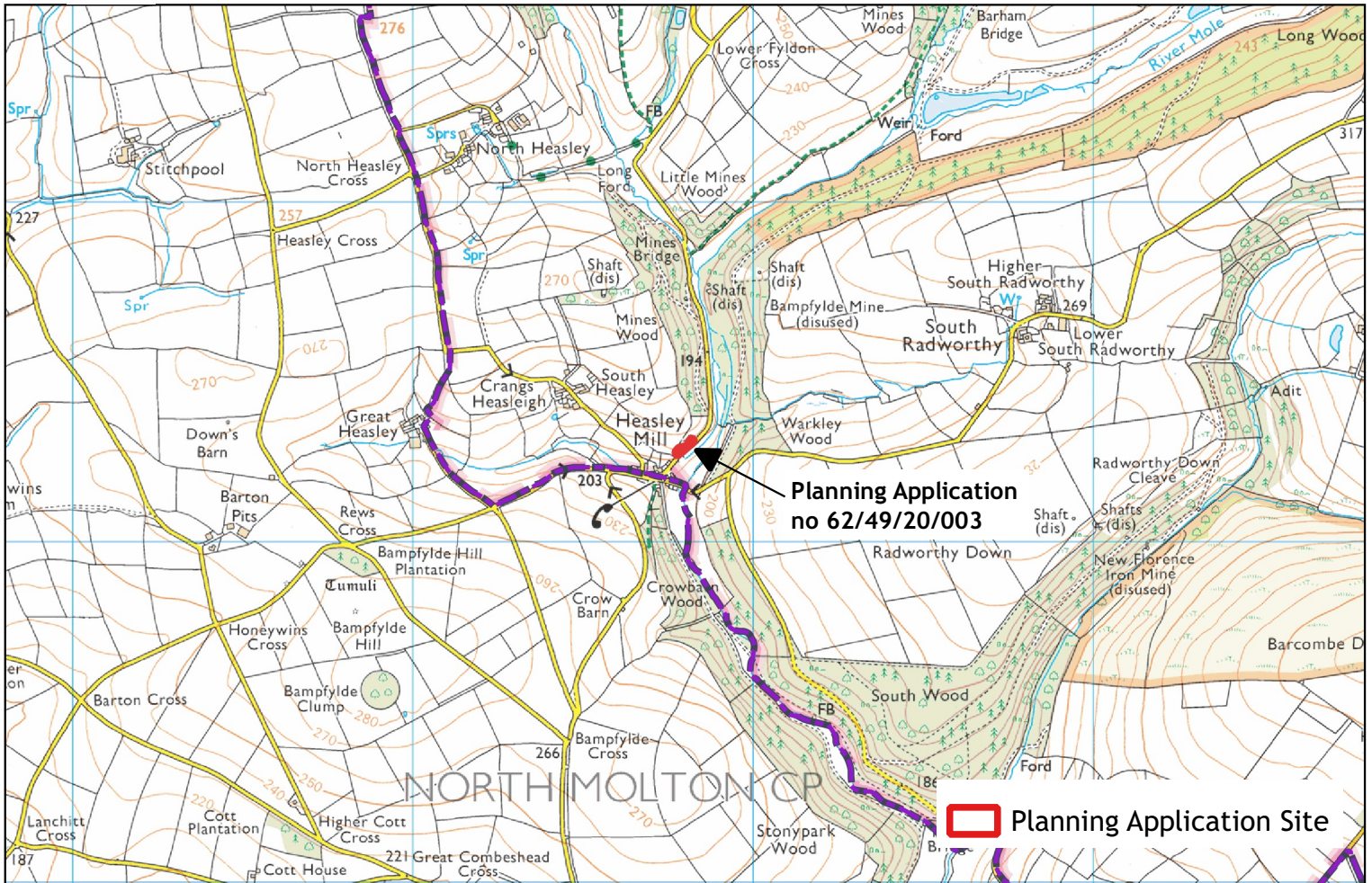
If you want to appeal against your Local Planning Authority's decision then you must do so within 6 months of the date of this notice.

Planning Application no 62/49/20/003



Site Map
Scale 1:2500

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Overview Map
Scale 1:20000

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Committee Report

Application Number:	6/42/20/107
Registration Date:	13-Jul-2020
Determination Date:	31-Aug-2020
Applicant	Mr R Knight
Agent:	Mr. K Bateman, Bateman Hosegood
Case Officer:	Ben Gilpin
Site Address:	Land To The East Of Hawkridge Village (Easting: 286201, Northing: 130656)
Proposal:	Proposed erection of a general purpose agricultural building for storage of fodder, machinery and tools.
Recommendation:	Refusal
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	Withypool & Hawkridge Parish Council have a formal view on the application that is contrary to the recommendation of Officers

Relevant History

None Relevant

Site Description & Proposal

The site is identified as being in a field circa 160 metres east of the centre of Hawkridge and located in open countryside. To the south of the site (the field) is a well-used restricted byway (DU 11/31). The restricted byway provides access to the highway to the west of the site.

The nearest residential property is circa 45 metres to the south west. This property has an associated outbuilding that is circa 40 metres south of the site.

The site is positioned on a ridge in the land and is partially screened by existing hedgerows and their associated trees.

The site is part of a wider agricultural holding (as evidenced by County Parish Holding (CPH) number 36/101/0234). The holding itself is approximately 10 acres (2.471 hectares).

At the time of the site visit the holding had no livestock evident, but the field to the west of the application site was being used for the grazing of three horses.

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The holding has an existing traditional stone built 'sheep barn' and associated yard, all enclosed within traditional wall and hedge top. This building is accessed from Marshclose Hill (public highway) and is circa 90 metres west of the site.

The proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of a dual-pitched, vertical timber boarded three bay barn building (one bay to be enclosed by doors), to be ancillary to the proposed use of the wider holding (the building is proposed to house machinery and fodder produced on the land). The building would be 13.7m long x 7.6m wide (plus a 1.5m overhang), and 3.7m high (at eaves).

The Design and Access / Planning Statement does suggest the building will be timber clad with an anthracite grey fibre cement roof.

Consultee Representations

SCC - ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE (HIGHWAYS): Standing Advice

SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COUNCIL: No comments received

WITHYPOOL AND HAWKRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL: Support

The Withypool & Hawkridge Parish Council have considered the following planning application: 6/42/20/107 Land to the east of Hawkridge Village - Proposed erection of a general-purpose agricultural building for storage of fodder, machinery and tools. They fully support the planning as they feel there is a genuine need for the building as long as it does not affect any of the local residents.

LANDSCAPE – ENPA: Objection

Context: this site is located in an open agricultural field to the eastern edge of the small hamlet of Hawkridge, to the north west of Dulverton. At an elevation of 290m AOD, this is an elevated site on the skyline of Hawkridge Ridge. To the south of the site lies the Withypool and Hawkridge restricted byeway (PROW) and to the west is the public highway of Marshclose Hill. The holding is bounded by typical Exmoor hedgebanks with a pattern of enclosure intact to that shown on the 1st Edition OS map (1880's) with a current land use of permanent pasture. Access to the site is provided by a pedestrian gate at the junction with Marshclose Hill and vehicle access has been formed from the restricted byeway.

Landscape Character: The site lies within the Exmoor Landscape Character Type F: Enclosed Farmed Hills with Commons and is adjacent to the deep wooded valleys of the River Barle and Danes Brook.

Key features of this distinctive landscape include a broad rolling terrain of hills and ridges; a mosaic of semi natural habitats including grasslands, copses and streams;

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land use of permanent pasture enclosed by beech hedgebanks; and narrow rural lanes flanked by tall beech hedges creating a strong sense of enclosure. The historic hamlet of Hawkridge including its parish church present a rich environment of natural and built features that are in scale and that nestle in its wider moorland setting.

Visual Amenity: located on the ridgeline, the application site provides extensive 270 degree panoramic views. The site is visible from the adjacent PROW, a well-used walking route.

Comments: this application proposes the introduction of an agricultural building to the centre of this small scale holding in an otherwise undeveloped location. It does not relate physically or functionally to any other buildings and it is unclear how the agricultural business of this holding supports the need for the development. The provision of associated access would further increase both the visual and character impact on the open agricultural land that forms this holding and there is currently no indication how this is intended to be enabled.

The mature beech hedgebanks are a typical feature of this area, providing both wind protection and a rich biodiverse habitat. Clarity should be sought on management works carried out to ensure the retention and protection of these to help conserve the landscape character of the National Park.

The development of an isolated storage building in this location does not seek to either conserve or enhance the undeveloped setting of this existing open agricultural landscape in this ridgeline location.

PROW - ENPA: Neither support nor object

This proposed development site is immediately adjacent to restricted byway DU11/31 and appears to be accessed from it. The restricted byway is a popular walking and riding route and carries the promoted Exe Valley Way. It has a good aggregate surface and is already regularly used by agricultural vehicles for access to fields, so I do not have any concerns about the surface in relation to this application.

However, I would like clarification that the access to between the development and the restricted byway is via an existing gateway. I am concerned to see that there is good visibility at this location to ensure the safety of users on the restricted byway when vehicles are pulling out onto it from the new agricultural building. The building is shielded from the restricted byway by a mature hedge but depending on its state of management, could be quite visible to those using the restricted byway, particularly equestrians.

It is important that, during construction, the public right of way remains unobstructed and available for use by the public at all times. Please see below for our standard advice for development in the vicinity of public rights of way.

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HISTORIC BUILDINGS – ENPA: Objection

The rural setting of the church is a key part of its significance and any development within its setting should conserve or enhance, especially because of its high listing. The building will be situated in an elevated position and is certainly within the setting of the church.

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

The NPPF also states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. I would judge the harm caused to be less than substantial. This harm therefore needs to be weighed against the public benefit provided. In my view this benefit is lacking and other less elevated sites or site that better relate to the surrounding build form should be sought.

ECOLOGY - ENPA: No objection subject to planning condition.

From reviewing the application and aerial images it is possible to see that the proposed agricultural building will be located on an area of semi-improved pasture. A hedgerow bank runs along the western boundary of the proposed building. I'm unsure what distance lies between the building and the hedgerow. If the distance is less than 2m there is a potential for roots to be damaged by the siting of the hardstanding to support the building. Therefore, due to the distance required and the potential for damage during the construction works please attach the following condition:

- The retained hedgerows along the western boundary will be protected during the works, including groundworks, by the establishment of Root Protection Areas in accordance with BS 5837:2012. The hedgerow will be subject to a 2m buffer marked by Heras fencing erected prior to works commencing. No materials or plant should be allowed within the buffer zone.

Reason: In accordance with BS 5837:2012, NPPF 2018 and ENPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure. Biodiversity Enhancement (Net Gain) As enhancement and compensation measures, and in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), please apply the following conditions to any planning permission granted.

- The following will be integrated into the design of the building and site plans: 1. Installation of 2 x Schwegler No. 10 swallow nesting cups, or similar, to be erected on a main beam of an open side section of the building. 2. The proposed new hedgerow to be planted as a landscape and screening features is to be planted up with native species comprised of a minimum of 5 of the following species: hazel, blackthorn,

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hawthorn, field maple, elder, elm, dog rose, bird cherry and spindle. The hedgerow will be coppiced and laid on reaching maturity and cut on a 3-5 year rotation thereafter. Photographs of the installed features will be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the completion of construction works.

Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Provided the above conditions are applied as worded, I have no objection to this application.

Representations

5 x members of the public have responded. 3 x letters of objection and 2 x letters of support have been received.

The letters of objection cite:

- Impact on the character of the area (the barn would be visible);
- There is no functional need for the barn (with an existing building already on the holding);
- Impact on 'dark skies' from electricity to the barn (night-time illumination);
- Inconsistencies within the application;
- Impact on ecology

The letters of support cite:

- Useful to the village;
- Beneficial to the environment, sheep and horses
- The building is beneficial to their (the applicants) lives

Policy Context

Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031

GP1: Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development

GP4: The Efficient Use of Land and Buildings

CC-S1: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

CC-S5: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Development

CC-S7: Pollution

CE-S1: Landscape and Seascape Character

CE-S2: Protecting Exmoor's Dark Night Sky

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CE-S3: Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
CE-S6: Design and Sustainable Construction Principles
CE-D1: Protecting Exmoor's Landscapes and Seascapes
SE-S4: Agricultural and Forestry Development
AC-D1: Transport and Accessibility Requirements for Development
AC-D2: Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material planning consideration.

Planning Considerations

The main planning considerations in this instance are whether the principle of the building in this location is acceptable (including review of the functional need of the structure), and if the design, scale and materials of the proposed building are appropriate and in the setting of an identified heritage asset.

To aid consideration the holding and its current use needs to be understood. The holding under CPH Number 36/101/0234 is stated as being 10 acres (2.471 hectares).

No evidence has been submitted that identifies other agricultural land within the ownership or control of the applicant that is in relatively close proximity to the site.

No agricultural appraisal has been submitted with the application. No evidence of existing stock has been provided although it has been suggested the land would be used for the grazing of circa 50 sheep.

At present, the land holding has one existing stone built agricultural building with enclosed yard area, and no livestock. Access to the yard area for vehicles is possible but is constrained (in that the larger more modern farm machinery would cause potential damage to the walls / hedgerow / trees whilst accessing and egressing from the yard). It is accepted the roof and internal formation of the existing building may require attention, but it is in place and available for agricultural use.

In light of the above the proposed building is based on aspirational needs for future use rather than evidence based functional needs of existing use.

ENPA Local Plan Policy SE-S4 is relevant in this instance. It reads:

"1. Permission will be granted for new or replacement buildings, tracks and structures or extensions required for agriculture or forestry purposes where:

a) it can be demonstrated there is a functional need for the extension, building, structure or track and its size and scale is commensurate with the demonstrated need;

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- b) the building, track or structure is designed for the purposes of agriculture or forestry;*
 - c) in the case of new buildings, the site is related physically and functionally to existing buildings associated with the business;*
 - d) buildings, tracks or structures are sited appropriately in the context of local topography and of an appropriate design that responds to and reinforces landscape character in terms of size, scale, massing, layout, external appearance and materials – if a landscaping scheme is required it should be in accordance with policy CE-D1;*
 - e) proposals do not generate a level of activity or otherwise detrimentally affect the amenity of surrounding properties and occupiers including through loss of daylight, overbearing appearance, or conflict with neighbouring land uses;*
 - f) appropriate measures are taken to ensure proposals do not, including through the level of activity, have an adverse impact on biodiversity and cultural heritage (in accordance with CE-S3 and CE-S4) or cause other unacceptable environmental impacts; and*
 - g) it can be demonstrated that opportunities have been taken for:
 - i) the integration of passive design and sustainable construction methods to improve energy efficiency;*
 - ii) the integration of appropriate renewable energy technologies to reduce carbon emissions in accordance with CC-S5; and*
 - iii) minimising surface water run-off to avoid impacts on water quality (CC-D1).**

2. New isolated buildings will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there are exceptional circumstances relating to an overriding functional need for a more isolated location, and where:

- a) they do not replace existing agricultural buildings that have been subdivided away from the holding; and*
- b) the requirement for them does not result from a change of farming practices, such that could adversely affect the management of the traditional landscape character of the National Park.*

3. Where new agricultural buildings with a floorspace of 500sqm or less are granted planning consent, permitted development rights may be withdrawn in respect of agricultural buildings and any land within its curtilage to alternative uses.”

The proposed building is considered isolated and separate from the other existing building on this comparatively small land holding of 10 acres. The existing and proposed building are circa 75 metres apart, so physically, and visually separated by hedgerows and trees.

Knowing the above, it is clear in adopted policy that any proposal such as this would need to demonstrate that there are exceptional circumstances relating to an overriding functional need for this more isolated location.

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The justification detailed in the Supporting Statement to the application states:

'5.1 The land, which does not have an existing agricultural building, was recently purchased by the applicant. The applicant requires the proposed building to store and keep dry fodder that will be produced from the surrounding land.

5.2 The building will also be used to store machinery and tools that are required to undertake the farming activities on the subject land.'

Having considered the application officers consider the holding does have an existing agricultural building, which is accessed from Marshclose Hill to the west of the site that would provide the necessary storage space. This building has an approximate built footprint of circa 80 square metres, with a comparable area of enclosed hard standing to the immediate east (this area forms the yard). The proposed building has a built footprint of approximately 91 square metres.

The proposed use of the new building is to store fodder (presumably hay) produced on the 10 acres. The new building is also proposed to store machinery and tools associated with the proposed agricultural enterprise.

In this case, knowing there is an existing, and sizeable traditional stone agricultural building with enclosed yard area, it is argued that there is an existing building that could accommodate the uses as described, and that no evidence of functional need has been provided. The yard is accessed via an existing 5-bar gate (approximately 3 metres wide). It is accepted that the larger modern agricultural vehicles could have difficulty accessing the yard, but smaller agricultural vehicles could access the area (compact tractors, quad bikes, 4-wheel drive vehicles).

Overall officers consider that the proposal does not accord with adopted Policy SE-S4 as there are no exceptional circumstances or functional needs to justify the new building, when there is an existing building that is considered suitably sized to provide the cover needed for hay and tools.

Landscape Character:

The proposed development needs to be considered in relation to its effect and impact on the landscape character.

The proposed development as detailed in this planning application has been formally objected to by the ENPA Landscape Officer, as well as receiving objections from members of the public.

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In this instance, consideration of Policy CE-D1 'Protecting Exmoor's Landscapes and Seascapes' is required.

Policy CE-D1 states that:

"1. Development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it is compatible with the conservation and enhancement of Exmoor's landscapes and seascapes through ensuring that:

a) the visual impact of the development in its immediate and wider setting is minimised through high quality design that reflects local landscape character with particular regard to scale, siting, materials, and colour; and
b) the cumulative and/or sequential landscape and visual effects of development do not detract from the natural beauty of the National Park and the experience of tranquillity.

2. Within Exmoor's Heritage Coast development should be appropriate to the coastal location and conserve the undeveloped nature of the coast consistent with Heritage Coast purposes.

3. Landscaping schemes should reinforce local landscape or seascape character and where these are required, conditions will be attached to protect important landscape characteristics and elements and whether appropriate replacement or additional landscape elements will be required.

4. Proposals which are significant in terms of scale and/or impact should provide a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment as part of the application submission."

In essence, for a development to be deemed compliant with adopted Policy it would need to conserve or enhance the character of Exmoor.

The comments from the ENPA Landscape Officer state that 'this application proposes the introduction of an agricultural building to the centre of this small scale holding in an otherwise undeveloped location. It does not relate physically or functionally to any other buildings and it is unclear how the agricultural business of this holding supports the need for the development. The provision of associated access would further increase both the visual and character impact on the open agricultural land that forms this holding and there is currently no indication how this is intended to be enabled.

The development of an isolated storage building in this location does not seek to either conserve or enhance the undeveloped setting of this existing open agricultural landscape in this ridgeline location.'

In this instance, with the undeveloped nature of the field pattern in this area, and that the building would be seen in isolation (so contrary to Policy SE-S4 (see above)), the

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provision of the barn, together with the ancillary track from the PRow to the structure across the field, would alter the character of the area.

Knowing the above, and that the proposal would not relate to other buildings within the small holding, it would be seen as a modern introduction into an historic and established landscape, in a location that would be visible from publicly accessible areas.

The provision of a new isolated structure, together with the trappings of use is considered incongruous in this landscape and would neither conserve nor enhance the character of this part of Exmoor, contrary to Policy CE-D1 of the ENPA Local Plan.

Impact on Heritage Assets:

The proposal has also had an objection from the ENPA Heritage Officer, raising concerns on the setting of the Grade II* Listed Church to the south west of the site (Church of St. Giles).

In this instance, the ENPA Heritage Officer has determined the proposed development would result in 'less than substantial' harm to the heritage asset.

Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) is relevant. This paragraph reads:

"196. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."

In addition, paragraph 3 of Policy CE-D3 of the ENPA Local Plan is pertinent. It reads:

"Heritage Assets and their Settings

Development proposals affecting a heritage asset and its setting should demonstrate:

- a) a positive contribution to the setting through sensitive design and siting;*
- b) the promotion of the understanding and enjoyment of the heritage asset and its setting or better reveal its significance and appreciation of the setting; and*
- c) avoidance of unacceptable adverse effects and cumulative visual effects that would impact on the setting."*

In this instance no evidence of the public benefit of the proposal have been suggested or identified in the applications' supporting information. For the 'less than substantial harm' to be mitigated it is clear in Paragraph 196 of the NPPF that a development

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should have or deliver some form of public benefit. That is not the case in this instance and as such it is considered the proposal would not avoid the unacceptable adverse effects on the setting of the Grade II* Listed Building. As such the scheme would not accord with the NPPF or Policy CE-D3 of the ENPA Local Plan.

Dark Skies:

One of the objections received have cited impact of the development on the Dark Skies of Exmoor. On the assumption that the development would have internal illumination (although this is not detailed in the submission) so potentially generating external light spill, it should be noted that the site is circa 7km south of the Dark Skies Reserve Buffer Zone, and is circa 9km south of the Dark Skies Reserve Core Area. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposal would be so detrimental to the Dark Skies Reserve or Policy CE-S2 of the ENPA Local Plan as to warrant a recommendation of refusal on these grounds.

Ecology:

In this instance the ENPA Ecologist has not raised an objection to the scheme, and has suggested that were it to be approved, it would be deemed acceptable and in accordance with adopted Policy, subject to the inclusion of planning conditions as outlined in their comments.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

In May 2019 the UK government declared a climate emergency, Exmoor National Park followed this by declaring a Climate Emergency in October 2019. To help meet this challenge the Local plan includes policies which seek to influence, contribute and challenge development to help meet the Climate Emergency. GP1 'Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development' Sets out that the need to consider future generations, through sustainability and resilience to climate change and adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Policy CC-S1 'Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption' states that climate change mitigation will be encouraged, development which reduces demand for energy, using small scale low carbon and renewable energy, looks to situate development which avoids sites that would put wildlife at risk together with measures which avoids the risk of flooding. Furthermore, Policy CC-S5 'Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Development' seeks to support small scale renewable energy schemes that assist in contributing towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and moving towards a carbon neutral National Park and policy CE-S6 'Design and Sustainable Construction Principles' seeks to incorporate sustainable construction methods which future proof against climate change impacts, including flood risk.

Paragraph 148 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that "the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise

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vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

There would be an impact on the climate from the construction process and the sourcing of construction materials. The proposal would be required to meet modern building regulations. It is considered that the impact on the climate resulting from the construction of the proposed development, given its nature and scale, would not be such that a reason for refusal should be given.

Human Rights

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

Conclusion

Three letters of objection have been received in the form of public representations. In addition, formal objections to the scheme have been received from the ENPA Landscape Officer and the ENPA Heritage Officer.

Great weight must be given to the conserving and enhancing of the National Parks' character, weighed against the deviation away from adopted policy. The proposal would not in this case provide a public benefit that would outweigh the less than substantial harm it would do to the grade II* Listed Building. In addition, the building would appear as an isolated structure, physically and visually separated from other buildings, and these elements, together with the impact on the character of the surrounding landscape in this location are considered contrary to the adopted policies of the ENPA Local Plan.

In light of the above, a refusal of planning permission is therefore recommended.

Recommendation

1. In this instance no exceptional circumstances or functional needs to justify the new building have been satisfactorily evidenced, when it is clear there is an existing building on the small holding that is considered suitably sized to provide the cover needed for hay and tools as suggested. As such it is considered that the proposal does not accord with Exmoor NP Local Plan Policy SE-S4 (Agricultural and Forestry Development).
2. The proposal would not relate to other buildings within the small holding, and it would be seen as a modern introduction into an historic and established landscape, in a location that would be visible from publicly accessible areas. The provision of a new isolated structure, together with the trappings of use is considered incongruous in this

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landscape and would neither conserve nor enhance the character of the area and there is considered, contrary to Exmoor NP Local Plan Policy CE-D1 (Protecting Exmoor's Landscapes and Seascapes).

3. The proposed siting and character of the building is considered to be to the detriment of the setting of the Grade II* Listed Building (Church of St. Giles), due to the buildings position being set away from the historic form of Hawkridge, and that building does not seek to incorporate or reflect the local vernacular or materials. In addition, as the development qualifies as 'less than substantial' in terms of harm, no public benefit is derived from the proposal. This is considered contrary to ENPA Local Plan Policy CE-S5 (Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment) and the National Planning Policy Framework, as the scheme would not make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness of the historic environment, and would not ensure that the setting of the Grade II* Listed Building (the affected heritage asset) is conserved or enhanced, and provides no tangible public benefit sufficient to counter the less than substantial harm.

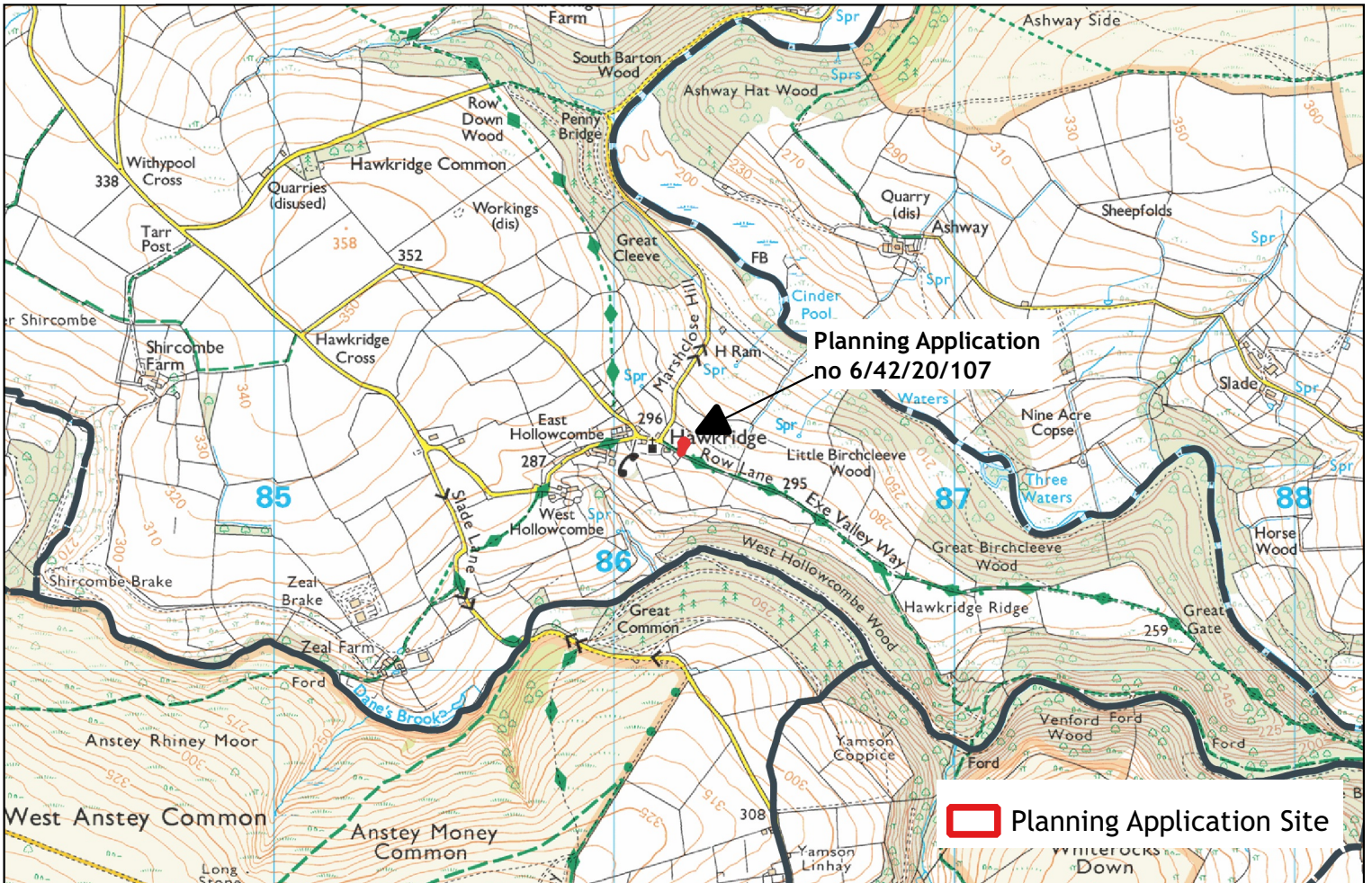
Informatives

This Authority has a pro-active approach to the delivery of development. Early pre-application engagement is always encouraged. In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, in determining this application, Exmoor National Park Authority has endeavoured to work positively and proactively with the agent/applicant, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, to ensure that all relevant planning considerations have been appropriately addressed to achieve a positive outcome. However, due to the nature of the proposal, and its position in the landscape and the lack of need being evidenced, the proposal could not be supported and recommended.



Site Map
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Overview Map
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7.7



Committee Report

Application Number:	6/9/20/115
Registration Date:	25-Sep-2020
Determination Date:	
Applicant	Claire Routley
Agent:	
Case Officer:	Amy Sanders
Site Address:	Gardners, 1, Amory Road, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9QY
Proposal:	Retrospective planning application for the erection of feather edge fence and metal gate.
Recommendation:	Approval subject to condition
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	The application comes before the Committee in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, because the Officer recommendation to approve planning permission is contrary to the view of the Town Council.

Relevant History

6/9/86/136 Proposed erection of 1200 litre Calor Gas tank at 1 Amory Road, Dulverton as described in plans, Approved, 01/22/1987

6/9/96/137 Proposed garage/workshop, 1 Amory Road, Dulverton, as described in the plans, Approved, 02/14/1997

Site Description & Proposal

The site is located within the residential area of the village of Dulverton. The site is located at the top of the junction so faces two highways. The highway Amory Road is located to the west, and to the north of the site is the B3222 Jury Road. Due to the layout of the site the private garden amenity area of the property is to the front (north) of the property and adjacent to the highway, with a vehicle parking area to the rear of the site. The property at no.1 Amory Road is a semi-detached dwellinghouse with rendered walls and tiled roof. There is a detached ancillary outbuilding directly to the west of the main dwelling. The existing boundary treatments at the property are a stone wall running along the northern boundary line adjacent to the highway Jury Road. The stone wall runs partly down the boundary line to the west by approximately 2 metres, and then the retrospective feather edge boarding fence joins the stone wall and runs down the eastern boundary of the site.

7.7

Proposal

This application seeks retrospective permission for the erection of a feather-edge timber fence along the western boundary of the site. The fence has replaced an earlier fence which has been removed due to age and rot. The height of the fence with the measurement taken from the pavement is 1950mm. The height of the fence means it requires planning permission and cannot be erected under the General Permitted Development Order (2015) (as amended), Schedule 2, Part 2, Class A, which allows for a 1 metre high fence to be erected in relation to a dwellinghouse, adjacent to a highway. As the fence at 1 Amory Road measures 1.95 metres, it exceeds the allowances of Permitted Development Rights, so a full planning application is required for this development.

Consultee Representations

Somerset West and Taunton Council: No comment received.

SCC - Highways Authority 29-Sep-2020: Standing Advice

Dulverton Town Council 13-Oct-2020: Observations: Members expressed concern that if the excess height of the fence is approved it will create an unwelcome precedent.

Representations

No comment received.

Policy Context

Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (including minerals and waste policies)

GP1 – GENERAL POLICY

CE-S6 – DESIGN AND SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

CE-S1 - LANDSCAPE & SEASCAPE CHARACTER

CE-D1 – PROTECTING EXMOOR'S LANDSCAPES AND SEASCAPES

CC-S1 - CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material planning consideration.

Planning Considerations

The main planning considerations in determining this application are design, scale and appearance and impact on the visual amenity.

Design, Scale and Appearance

Enclosures such as fences at residential properties in developed locations such as the town of Dulverton is generally a standard and typical development associated with this character area. Although the fence is larger in height than the previous fence that existed on the site, and is larger in height than the immediate neighbouring property's enclosures, it is not considered to be too large in height to be unacceptable. It does not appear out of place or incongruous in the setting because it is related to a modern housing estate. Owing to the layout of the site, what would be the private rear garden of the property, at the context of this site, is to the north and front of the property, and facing the highway. As a result, the fence is required for privacy, to prevent car headlights shining into the property window on the eastern elevation, and safety for the applicant. The highway Amory Road is used for residential on street parking, which is directly adjacent to the fence.

There are similar examples of boundary fences along Jury Road, both in terms of design, height and materials. The position of the fence is in close proximity to the building line of the property, and it does not harm the open frontage of the property when viewed from the highway Jury Road.

The proposed use of timber is supported in accordance with Policy CE-S6 and over time it will age in appearance and soften into the street scene. Policy CE-S6 of the local plan encourages the use of traditional, natural and sustainable materials to ensure that the appearance of new developments conserves and enhances the quality and character of the built environment and will expect the use of traditional, vernacular materials.

The site ground levels are sloping from north to south, which helps to minimise the impact of the scale of the fence, in particular as the properties to the north are on a higher ground level. The fence is also read in relation to the developed backdrop and is in close relation to the main property at no.1 Amory Road.

It is noted that Dulverton Town Council have added observations on the proposal that it may set an unwelcome precedent. However, the case is considered on its own merits, and as it appears in the plans today, the height, scale and appearance of the fence is considered acceptable.

In light of the above, the proposal is considered acceptable in line with Local Plan Policy.

Impact on Landscape Character and Visual Amenity

Policies CE-S1 and CE-D1 of the Local Plan seek to conserve, enhance and protect Exmoor's landscapes and seascapes. Policy CE-D1 states that development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it is compatible with the conservation and enhancement of Exmoor's landscapes and seascapes.

7.7

The site is not located within a conservation area, or in the setting of a listed building. This style of fence is typical of residential fence boundary so is considered to have an acceptable impact on the visual amenity of the street scene. The visual impact of the fence is minimised through the use of a sympathetic traditional material.

It is considered that the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on the street scene or the wider landscape, the works will have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the landscape and are therefore acceptable and comply with policies CE-S1 and CE-D1 of the Local Plan.

Other matters

The fence does not have an undue impact on neighbouring amenity owing to its location. It is a suitable distance away from residential neighbouring properties to not lead to loss of sunlight, privacy, or feeling of overbearing.

The Highway Authority have issued standing advice and do not object to the proposal. The fence will not alter the layout of the highway, nor impede or block views onto or from the highway so is not considered to negatively impact highway safety.

In May 2019 the UK government declared a climate emergency. Exmoor National Park declared a Climate Emergency in October 2019. The Local Plan includes policies which seek to influence, contribute and challenge development to help meet the Climate Emergency. Policy GP1 of the Local Plan sets out that the need to consider future generations, through sustainability and resilience to climate change and adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Policy CC-S1 states that climate change mitigation will be encouraged, development which reduces demand for energy, using small scale low carbon and renewable energy, looks to situate development which avoids sites that would put wildlife at risk together with measures which avoids the risk of flooding. Policy CC-S5 seeks to support small scale renewable energy schemes that assist in contributing towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and moving towards a carbon neutral National Park and Policy CE-S6 seeks to incorporate sustainable construction methods which future proof against climate change impacts, including flood risk.

Paragraph 148 of the National Planning Policy Framework prescribes that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

The materials used on the fence are natural and sustainable because the fence uses timber. The works are small in scale and minimal. It is considered that the impact on the climate resulting from the construction of the proposed development, given its nature and scale, would not be such that a reason for refusal should be given.

Human Rights

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

Conclusion

The fence that has been erected at the property no.1 Amory Road is considered to have an acceptable impact on the street scene. It is not within the setting of a Listed Building, nor a conservation area, and is a typical style of fence seen at residential properties and is not out of character for this type of residential developed area. The choice of material of timber is regarded to be in line with Policy CE-S6. On balance, the scheme is recommended for approval.

Recommendation

Approval subject to the following condition:

1. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the submitted site plan, location plan and drawings numbered ENPA File No. 2 and ENPA File No. 3 and date stamped 25-Sep-2020, unless otherwise required by condition below.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the development accords with the approved plans.

Informatives

MONITORING OF DEVELOPMENT

The applicant/developer is reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that the requirements of each planning condition are met and that the works are undertaken in accordance with the approved plans. Any failure to meet the terms of a planning condition or work which does not accord with the approved plans leaves the applicant/developer liable to formal action being taken. The National Park Authority endeavours to monitor on site the compliance with conditions and building works. This has benefits for applicants and developers as well as the National Park. To assist with this monitoring of development the applicant/developer is requested to give at least fourteen days notice of the commencement of development to ensure that effective monitoring can be undertaken. The Planning Section can be contacted at Exmoor National Park Authority, Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9HL or by telephone on 01398 323665 or by email plan@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk.

POSITIVE & PROACTIVE STATEMENT

This Authority has a pro-active approach to the delivery of development. Early

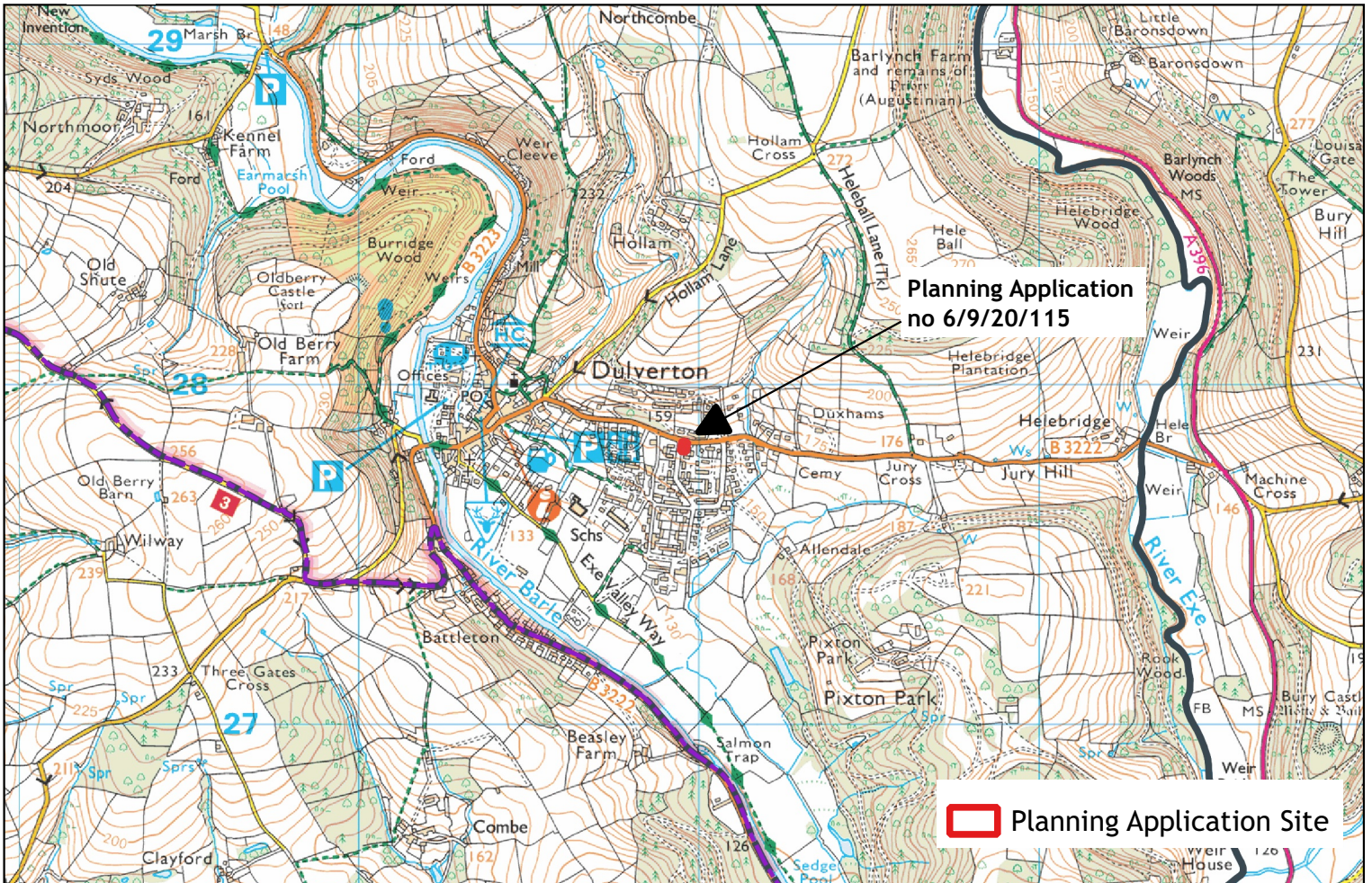
7.7

preapplication engagement is always encouraged. In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, in determining this application, Exmoor National Park Authority has endeavoured to work positively and proactively with the agent/applicant, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, to ensure that all relevant planning considerations have been appropriately addressed to achieve a positive outcome.



Site Map
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Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive

Ref and Grid Ref	Applicant & Location	Decision and Date
WTCA 20/12	Mr P Ogilvie - Removal of 1 no. Table Dogwood tree (Cornus controversa) adjacent to r/o property. (WTCA) - 1, CHURCH LANE, DULVERTON, TA22 9DR	Approved 17-Nov-2020
GDO 20/07	Ms C Dehaini - Prior notification for proposed erection of 2no Polytunnels and 1no rainwater collection tank. (GDO - Agricultural/Forestry) - Higher Barn Farm, Slade Lane, Roadwater, Watchet, TA23 0LY	GDO - Prior Approval Not Reqd 26-Oct-2020
62/50/20/014	Thomas Wilde - Proposed variation of Condition 2 of approved application 62/50/18/006 to demolish existing single storey extension, replace dormers with rooflights and install windows, doors and rooflight. (Alteration/Lift Condition) - Ivy Cottage, Parracombe, Barnstaple, EX31 4RJ	Approved with Conditions 04-Nov-2020
6/27/20/116	Miss K Robinson - Proposed change of use of residential dwellinghouse (C3 Use) to Guesthouse (C1 Use). (Full) - Snows Orchard, Porlock Weir Road, Porlock, TA24 8NX	Approved with Conditions 18-Nov-2020
6/8/20/113	Mr P Cook - Proposed erection of agricultural storage building (69.2m ²). Resubmission of withdrawn application 6/8/20/101. (Full) - BLAGDON VIEW, WHEDDON CROSS, MINEHEAD, TA24 7ED	Approved with Conditions 10-Nov-2020
6/15/20/106	Dr D Lungley - Proposed construction of concrete plinth (1m x1m x 0.2m) to hold boulder (0.5m x 0.5m) with attached bronze plaque. (Full) - Land Adjacent to bridleway (Easting 928, Northing 331), Bridgetown Wood	Approved with Conditions 13-Nov-2020
6/42/20/109	Mr & Mrs Thorpe & Heggadon - Proposed alteration of existing carport into habitable accommodation, including external cladding on the north elevation and the erection of a single storey extension. (Householder) - Newland House, Chapel Lane, Withypool, TA24 7QX	Approved with Conditions 11-Nov-2020
6/40/20/109	Sarah Cox - Proposed demolition of existing single storey extension and the erection of a replacement single storey side extension. (Householder) - Rose Cottage, Halse Lane, Winsford, TA24 7JE	Approved with Conditions 29-Oct-2020

Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive

Ref and Grid Ref	Applicant & Location	Decision and Date
6/40/20/108	Mr Martin Harris - Proposed single storey extensions forming new kitchen,dining room & entrance hall (Householder) - RIVER HOUSE, WINSFORD, MINEHEAD, TA24 7JF	Approved with Conditions 05-Nov-2020
62/50/20/013LB	Mr B Nicholls - Listed Building Consent for the erection of a porch to the front elevation of West Middleton Farmhouse together with the erection of an Airband dish to the rear elevation of the farmhouse. (Listed Building Consent) - WEST MIDDLETON FARM, PARRACOMBE, BARNSTAPLE, EX31 4PG	Approved with Conditions 10-Nov-2020
62/50/20/012	Mr B Nicholls - Proposed erection of a porch to the front elevation of West Middleton Farmhouse together with the erection of an Airband dish to the rear elevation of the farmhouse. (Householder) - WEST MIDDLETON FARM, PARRACOMBE, BARNSTAPLE, EX31 4PG	Approved with Conditions 10-Nov-2020
6/3/20/118	Mr G Buckingham - Proposed laying of concrete pad (115sqm). (Full) - P H & M E BUCKINGHAM & SON, LYNCOMBE FARM, BROMPTON REGIS, DULVERTON, TA22 9NH	Approved with Conditions 09-Nov-2020
6/29/20/107LB	Craig Duffy - Listed building consent for the proposed installation of ground floor ensuite, together with, the subdivision of first floor bathroom to form 2no ensuite bedrooms. (part retrospective). (Listed Building Consent) - West Lynch House, Bossington Road, Selworthy, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 8HJ	Approved with Conditions 22-Oct-2020
6/29/20/106LB	Craig Duffy - Listed building consent for the proposed refurbishment of 2no barns, together with the replacement of roof, installation of new windows and doors, formation of a bat void and associated alterations. (Listed Building Consent) - West Lynch House, Bossington Road, Selworthy, TA24 8HJ	Approved with Conditions 09-Nov-2020
WTPO 20/06	Mr T Riley - Works to Tree subject to Tree Preservation Order: Removal of Oak tree together with putting TPO on another Oak tree. (WTPO) - OAKS HOTEL, PORLOCK, MINEHEAD, TA24 8ES	Approved 17-Nov-2020

Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive

Ref and Grid Ref	Applicant & Location	Decision and Date
6/43/20/106	Mr & Mrs Dutton - Proposed demolition of rear extension and porch, together with the erection of a 1.5 storey rear extension with single storey side extension. (Householder) - Huntscott Cottage, Huntscott Road, Luccombe, TA24 8RR	Approved with Conditions 12-Nov-2020
6/3/20/116	Mr E Luxton - Proposed agricultural building (227sqm). (Full) - OATWAY FARM, BROMPTON REGIS, DULVERTON, TA22 9NQ	Approved with Conditions 06-Nov-2020
6/8/20/112	Mr & Mrs Foxwell - Proposed conversion of part of adjoining barn to form extension to dwelling, together with raising of dwelling roof to extend first floor, internal alterations and the installation of a sewage package treatment plant. (Full) - Blagdon Farm, Wheddon Cross, Minehead, TA24 7ED	Approved with Conditions 30-Oct-2020
WTCA 20/11	Mr J Griffiths - Works to Trees in Conservation Area: Removal of conifer T7, Removal of fallen laurel T9, Removal of fallen apple T5, Removal of lilac T13. (T's 3,8,10,12 dead. T's1,2,11 previously approved). (WTCA) - ZEPHYR COTTAGE, LYDIATE LANE, LYNTON, EX35 6AJ	Approved 04-Nov-2020
6/10/20/111	Mr. N Johnson, National Trust - Proposed retention of Portakabin approved under planning permission ref. 6/10/19/111, which is otherwise required to be removed by 1st November 2020, to extend the period for the siting and use of the Portakabin until 30 September 2021. (An extension to the consent for change of use of the Stable Block for indoor seating is not required). (Full) - DUNSTER CASTLE, DUNSTER, MINEHEAD, TA24 6SL	Approved with Conditions 26-Oct-2020
WTCA 20/10	Mr D Austin - Works to Trees in Conservation Area: Ash (T1) - removal of 60cm stem diameter showing advanced die back Ash (T2) - removal of 45cm stem diameter showing advanced die back Ash (T3) - remove lower limbs overhanging garden with signs of die back Oak (T4) (Quercus Ilex) crown reduction to reduce height, shading and stress on split stem (WTCA) - SOUTH HILL HOUSE, PARRACOMBE, BARNSTAPLE, EX31 4PE	Approved 04-Nov-2020

Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive

Ref and Grid Ref	Applicant & Location	Decision and Date
WTCA 20/09	Mr T Wilde - Works to Trees in Conservation Area: Removal of five Leylandii conifer trees to promote two beech trees growing next to them and to relieve excessive shading. (WTCA) - IVY COTTAGE, PARRACOMBE, BARNSTAPLE, EX31 4RJ	Approved 04-Nov-2020
6/3/20/110	Mackenzie - Proposed replacement of rear first floor flat roof dormer together with erection of new single storey extension to rear and side. (Householder) - Hartford Lodge, Hartford Road, Brompton Regis, TA22 9NS	Approved with Conditions 09-Nov-2020
6/3/19/123	Mr, J, Andrews - Proposed Change of Use of barns to holiday accommodation. (Full) - Lower Woolcotts Farm, Brompton Regis, Somerset	Approved with Conditions 17-Nov-2020

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 December 2020

PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING THE CORPORATE PLAN 2020-2021

Report of the Head of Strategy and Performance

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT: To inform Members about the progress made in implementing key actions within the current Corporate Plan for the period April 2020-September 2020.

RECOMMENDATION: The Authority is recommended to:

- (1) NOTE the progress in implementing the Authority's key commitments set out in the Corporate Plan 2020-2021
- (2) DELEGATE to the Finance and Performance Advisory Panel and Leadership Team further scrutiny of Authority performance across all the Corporate Plan actions for the next reporting period to 31 March 2021.

Authority Corporate Plan: The Corporate Plan outlines the priorities for the Authority for the period to March 2021 and how we will help to achieve the priorities in the *Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan*. It continues to closely follow Government priorities set out in the *25 Year Environment Plan*, and also indicates how the Authority will take forward the recommendations in the Landscapes Review.

Legal and Equality Implications: Section 65(4) Environment Act 1995 – provides powers to the National Park Authority to “*do anything which in the opinion of the Authority, is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to:-*

- (a) *the accomplishment of the purposes mentioned in s. 65 (1) [National Park purposes]*
- (b) *the carrying out of any functions conferred on it by virtue of any other enactment.”*

The equality impact of the recommendations of this report has been assessed as follows: There are no foreseen adverse impacts on any protected group(s). Engagement through the outreach work within the plan is designed to have a positive impact on protected groups.

Consideration has been given to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and an assessment of the implications of the recommendations of this report is as follows: There are no implications for the Human Rights Act.

Financial and Risk Implications: No financial or risk implications have been identified. Performance management exerts a positive influence on financial and risk management.

Climate Change Response: Additional actions have been added to the Corporate Plan in response to the Climate Emergency Declaration

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The 2020-21 Corporate Plan was approved by the Authority in March 2020. It sets out the key priorities for the Authority for the period of the plan.
- 1.2 Performance is monitored quarterly by Leadership Team to ensure that the actions within the Corporate Plan are being achieved and, if necessary, to provide an opportunity for resources to be re-allocated or to review the proposed action. Oversight is provided by Members through the Finance and Performance Advisory Panel, although the Panel has not been able to meet during the last six months due to the Covid-19 (CV19) pandemic.
- 1.3 In August 2020, a report was brought to Members on the impact of budget cuts and the CV19 pandemic on the delivering of the 2020-21 Corporate Plan. This current report before Members is a six month review setting out progress against the Corporate Plan from 1st April to the 30th September 2020.

2. Corporate Plan at a Glance

- 2.1 The actions within the plan are grouped as follows:

People	Exmoor for All: Where everyone feels welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Exmoor Experience• Well-managed Recreation and Access• Thriving Tourism built on Sustainability
Place	Inspiring Landscapes: Diverse and beautiful, rich in wildlife and history <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Celebrated Landscapes• Wildness and Tranquillity with Dark Night Skies, and Sensitive Development• Valued Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage• Rich in Wildlife
Prosperity	Working Landscapes: Thriving communities and a vibrant local economy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working Landscapes• Strong Local Economy• Thriving Communities• A Valued Asset
Monitoring and Research	Improving our knowledge and understanding of Exmoor's special qualities
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage corporate finances and diversify income streams• Work with communities, businesses and partners to deliver the National Park Partnership Plan and statutory purposes• Develop and maintain effective and efficient services• Manage the Authority's Estate and operations to support delivery of National Park purposes

3. Performance Report - Overview

- 3.1 Exmoor National Park Authority has faced the challenge of delivering the Corporate Plan objectives against a background of increasing expectations nationally in the light of the Glover review of Protected Landscapes, the declaration of a climate emergency, and also within the context of ongoing budgetary constraints, as well as the significant impact of the CV19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, most Corporate Plan actions are being implemented, although some have fallen behind due to various pressures arising from CV19, staff changes, and other factors outside the control of the Authority. This has been made possible by a dedicated staff team with appropriate Member contributions.
- 3.2 A full assessment of progress with the actions in the Corporate Plan is given in Appendix 1. In addition to the numerous successes marked in green, areas where progress was not on target are marked in amber or red, and include areas where the timetable has slipped or where progress was not made due to factors outside the Authority's control.

Clare Reid

Head of Strategy and Performance

Hazel Malcolm

Business Support Officer

November 2020

Background papers on which this report, or an important part of it are based, constitute the list of background papers required by Section 100 D (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to be open to members of the public comprise:

Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2020/21

Government's 25 Year Environment Plan

Protected Landscapes Review, Julian Glover September 2019

PROGRESS AGAINST CORPORATE PLAN ACTIONS

1ST APRIL TO 20TH SEPTEMBER 2020

PEOPLE. The Exmoor Experience: More people enjoy Exmoor, are inspired, get involved, and learn about it's special qualities

Highlights:

- All ENPA volunteer roles were paused in mid-March due to CV19 restrictions, so the focus of activity was switched to virtual activities and training. A key achievement was the development of online wildlife surveys using iNaturalist, with 4,000 records submitted to date this year, and a series of online wildlife identification training sessions attended by over 200 people. Five sessions were streamed live to the general public to replace the cancelled Wildwatch events programme. A phased restart of roles began in June where social distancing was possible, starting with Pathwatchers and the Exmoor Non-Native Invasive Species (ENNIS) project. Volunteer-led guided walks resumed in August for North Hill and Dunster, with capacity reduced in line with CV19 guidance and new volunteer site wardens were appointed for Barlynch Priory. Overall, the level of volunteer days has slightly increased when compared with the same period last year (445 days compared to 401 days) due to increased online engagement. Ongoing contact with volunteers has continued throughout this period via quarterly newsletters, with 1,009 registered contacts, a 5% rise on last year.
- Due to CV19 restrictions, the planned Public Health Environment / National Parks conference has been postponed until 2021. This is also the case with our planned "Welcome to Exmoor" days. The Families United through Nature (FUN) Project has continued to support West Somerset Families - including delivering food parcels in the initial lock down phase and then returning to activity provision with reduced numbers and additional Covid safety measures. Work continues with a range of partners and projects to promote and provide the health and well-being benefits of Exmoor.
- Pinkery has continued to provide safe educational experiences by welcoming schools for day visits rather than residential stays (from September). The total number of users has understandably fallen, with around 200 users compared to around 1,000 over the same period last year. The Young Rangers week had to be postponed until 2021.
- The increase in new audiences visiting Exmoor following the lifting of the first lockdown provided a great opportunity to engage with people, many of whom were visiting for the first time. Staff capacity was focused on this engagement work, particularly given the understandable reduction in the planned public events programme. Exceptions include our volunteer led guided walks programme and an increased number of online events. Planning for the 2020 Dark Skies Festival in October continued, with a reduced and amended programme to adhere to government guidelines.
- All the National Park Centres were closed from late March due to CV19. The Centres reopened towards the end of June in a limited capacity in line with Government guidance and were able to provide an important service to visitors during the summer months, which was reflected by Lynmouth gaining a Tripadvisor Certificate of Excellence. The result of the initial lockdown and CV-19 restrictions

means that to date visitor numbers are down almost 50% compared to the same period in 2019, however the Centres have continued to perform well in relation to income, with overall spend still down but only by less than 10% despite the much bigger fall in visitor numbers, representing a 75% growth in spend per head. To have grown the spend per head so much is a very positive platform to build on. The fall in income will be met through the business support funding secured which totalled over £108,000 (rate relief and grant).

PEOPLE. Well-managed Recreation and Access: Exmoor has a first class rights of way network. Our paths, open access and recreational facilities are enhanced to offer more and better experiences for people who want to explore and enjoy the National Park.

Highlights:

- Despite the initial loss of time on Rights of Way maintenance at the start of year due to lockdown, the team have made good progress, with 229 network faults resolved in this period, of which 59% were resolved within 90 days (the target is 80% across the year), and the first cuts on the paring programme completed by the end of June. Ranger path inspections have continued on schedule and the team also surveyed the South West Coast path during this period, a significant additional piece of work.
- There are no current restrictions on Access land.
- 4 major works have been completed including Woodside Bridge.
- Ten Explorer Routes have been developed and filmed. These are short, accessible walks with clear, high quality information in order to assist new visitors with an introduction to Exmoor. The aim is to launch these in Q3 as part of our Tourism Recovery work.
- A lot of focus during this period has been on the management of our most popular locations. Due to the unusually busy summer (a rough estimate of 30% increase in visitor numbers in the most popular locations based on Ranger inspections) we have put extra Ranger resources in place along with support from our Education team to regularly visit all popular sites, engaging with visitors and clearing litter. A one way system was installed at Tarr Steps along with signage and special arrangements at our toilet blocks to help reduce CV19 risk and improve visitor confidence.

PEOPLE. Thriving Tourism built on Sustainability: The tourism economy is vibrant, innovative and growing, and celebrates Exmoor's distinctive character.

The tourism and hospitality sectors have been severely impacted by the CV19 pandemic. The lifting of restrictions over the summer enabled those businesses who re-opened to benefit from part of the season and an increase in visitors due to more local 'staycations'. However, the current lockdown has ended hope of a longer extension to the season from those seeking to visit once the schools have returned.

Highlights:

- ENPA has made significant efforts to support local businesses through our co-ordination of the Exmoor Tourism Network and development of the joint Exmoor Covid-19 Tourism Response and Recovery Plan engaging with key tourism bodies and stakeholders. Q2 saw the development of a united marketing campaign 'Exmoor All Seasons' to boost out of season visitation.

- Following the success of a joint National Parks England bid to Discover England, funding of £150k has been secured for all the participating National Parks, including Exmoor, to extend the National Park Experience collection for six months. This will enable the collection to be embedded and transformed as a domestic offer to be used in promotion of the National Parks.
- Eat Exmoor materials continue to be rolled out and adopted by a range of retailers and producers. The Exmoor Lamb Register was launched June with good press coverage and accompanying video.
- Work that has not progressed due to CV19 includes the Ranger Experience days, Exmoor Discovery Days at Pinkery, and a revised programme of 'green tourism' training for local tourism providers. This latter action will be incorporated into the Tourism Response and Recovery Plan to enable businesses to benefit from wider 'green recovery' plans being developed regionally.

PLACE. Celebrated Landscapes: The natural beauty, distinct character and diversity of Exmoor's landscapes are celebrated, conserved and enhanced

Highlights:

- Volunteer work at Ashcombe Gardens has been suspended due to CV19. During this time large numbers of ash trees have been felled due to ash dieback. The Spirit of Place event was held during September 2020 with an online proforma and on site stations where people could contribute.
- Ash dieback clearance work has been completed at Ashcombe gardens and is now focussing on Hawkcombe Wood where there are substantial numbers of trees that present a risk to the public using rights of way.

PLACE. Wildness and Tranquillity with Dark Night Skies and Sensitive Development: Exmoor is somewhere you can experience tranquillity, openness, wildness and dark night skies. Development is sensitive to the National Park's special qualities and conserves its scenic quality and setting.

- A Dark Skies tourism initiative has been started to promote the Exmoor Dark Skies Reserve. Four virtual training sessions were run for tourism providers and a new Dark Sky Friendly Business Accreditation was launched, with the first businesses gaining recognition late Sept 20220. Jo Richardson (Space Detectives) has been engaged to provide further business support and training. Development of a Dark Skies Discovery Walk is in progress.
- Exmoor's status as a Dark Sky Reserve requires an annual monitoring report to be submitted to the International Dark Skies Association, the latest [report](#) confirms that Exmoor continues to meet the qualifying criteria for 'silver tier' status. It also suggests that two locations meet the criteria for 'gold tier' status, something that ENPA can aspire further towards. Staff are working with other Dark Sky Places including other National Parks, on future actions to support maintenance of the Dark Sky Reserve, including guidance on lighting.
- Work on the Design Group has been halted due to lack of capacity with the Planning Policy officer vacancy. There are also likely to be significant changes to the planning system including proposed design codes which will need to be taken into account in any future work.

PLACE. Valued Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage: Exmoor’s historic environment is better understood, cared for and protected. Its cultural heritage and rural traditions are valued for their place in telling Exmoor’s story and shaping its future.

- Work has continued on ensuring that our historic environment is well managed and better protected. Following the completion of significant consolidation work at Barlynch Priory, new interpretation panels and leaflet were produced, and a CV19 safe open day held in September as part of Heritage Open Days.
- Historic Environment work is continuing as part of the Mires project on Exmoor. Excavations to examine remnant field system and associated soils were undertaken at Codsand with Brighton University, although limited through CV19 restrictions.

Place: Rich in Wildlife: Exmoor is richer in wildlife. Habitats are in good condition, expanded, connected, and support a greater abundance of species

Highlights:

- Work on nature recovery continues, including progress with broad scale nature recovery mapping as part of the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) Test and Trial. The Nature Conservation Advisory Panel has continued to develop the nature recovery vision and illustrations, which have been discussed with other partnership plan groups.
- Despite the CV19 pandemic, the Exmoor Non-Native Invasive Species (ENNIS) Project has still been able to deliver key actions to treat invasive species such as knotweed, montbretia, skunk cabbage and signal crayfish. Over 80% of known skunk cabbage sites and 90% of knotweed sites have been treated or monitored. The project is continually to trial new approaches including Rootwave technology and controlling Himalayan balsam on a trial area of the River Barle and is improving our knowledge of other non-native invasive species across the National Park using iNaturalist.

PROSPERITY. Working Landscapes: Exmoor’s land-based communities and businesses are supported to provide health food and good quality timber, and ensure that Exmoor’s landscapes continue to be well managed and cared for

Highlights:

- Work on the Test and Trial for Defra’s New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS) is progressing well, in partnership with Exmoor Hill Farming Network and woodland managers. This has included mapping natural capital assets and opportunities, and further work to refine the natural capital register to improve the cultural heritage elements. A second round of engagement with sample farms is planned to further test the approach and estimate viable payment levels.
- The Game Shoot Group has not met since last year, partly due to the lockdown situation. Evidence review reports from the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Natural England are being considered. Legal advice has been received on planning permission considerations, and some cases of potential unauthorised change of use are being worked on. There has also been engagement with local residents who have raised concerns. Following an

evidence review by Natural England and legal challenge by Wild Justice, DEFRA have decided to introduce interim licence arrangements for Pheasant and Red Leg Partridge release sites that are likely to impact on European Protected Sites (Special Areas of Conservation). Licence arrangements are planned to be in place by Feb 2021 and ENPA is engaged in the fast track consultation process.

- In April 2020, management of the Headwaters of the Exe project passed from Exmoor National Park Authority to FWAG South West. The two organisations will continue to work together closely, and with other partners. As before, project targets are to improve water quality through measures that will also provide benefits to maintaining and increasing the stock of natural capital within the catchment.
- ENPA's herd of Exmoor ponies have fared well. Three mares were placed in isolation and supported through the Spring. A suitable stallion was found to increase the low numbers of the Haddon bloodline.
- The swaling review is ongoing and officers are engaging with Natural England, DEFRA, the fire service and other partners and will provide an update to the next Moorland and Farming Board meeting.

PROSPERITY. Strong Local Economy: The local economy is more sustainable with increase innovation, entrepreneurship and improved economic prospects

- The Rural Enterprise Exmoor Research Report was published Q1. In Q3 officers will procure external services to support development of key priorities for Exmoor's economic growth within the National Park context. Additional funding has been secured from the Somerset County Council Business Rates Retention pilot to bolster business engagement activities.
- Further work to support the economy is reported in the Tourism section above.

PROSPERITY. Thriving Communities: Exmoor's local communities are thriving with strong connections to the National Park

- ENPA runs a small Partnerships Fund supporting community efforts to further National Park purposes. During Q1 the fund was repurposed as a Covid Response Fund providing immediate support of up to £1,000 to help maintain the viability of grass root organisations contributing to National Park purposes. A total of nine grants were offered under this scheme. The fund has now reverted to its core criteria with a priority towards projects that can demonstrate a contribution to Exmoor's recovery from Covid. A further four grants were offered in Q2.
- Progress with affordable housing sites was delayed due to CV19 restrictions, with face to face meetings suspended. In Cutcombe and adjoining parishes, landowners have been contacted and plans were made for CV19 safe meetings with the local community to consider the options, but these have been delayed again due to further restrictions. On a positive note, the new affordable housing developed by Live West has been finished in Dulverton and new residents have been found for all of the 6 one-bedroom local need homes. The housing has a section 106 legal agreement to ensure that they will be kept available in perpetuity for local people in housing need.

- Somerset West and Taunton Council recruited a Rural Housing Enabler to help bring forward new affordable housing on Exmoor, including support for custom/self-builders with a local housing need, working with communities, landowners, housing providers and the National Park Authority. The post will also be tasked with reinvigorating the established Exmoor Rural Housing Network (RHN).
- Every five years, ENPA is required to update the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which sets out how the Authority will engage with local communities and stakeholders. Given the CV19 restrictions which limit the engagement opportunities, an interim SCI was adopted by the Authority in October 2020. A Local Plan Summary and guide was produced to assist all those involved in the planning process including applicants, local communities and parish and Town Councils, consultees, agents and architects. The summary can be found here <https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/local-plan-2011-2031-summary>.
- Work has continued with the police and other agencies to combat rural crime, particularly poaching, unauthorised off-road driving and fly-tipping, and the Exmoor Rural Crime Initiative was able to meet virtually in Sept 2020. Incidents of deer poaching declined during lockdown and game dealer venison prices have dropped substantially. A meeting has been held with police and landowners to look at a proactive approach to deer poaching for the coming 'season' making use of new technology.

PROSPERITY. A Valued Asset: Exmoor is celebrated for the value it brings to the region and nationally

Highlights:

- Since the publication of the Landscapes Review by Julian Glover in September 2019, National Parks have continued to engage with Government on the response to the report's recommendations. A series of four Delivery Plans have been produced by National Parks England on Wildlife, Climate Response, Farming and Land Management, and Parks for All. National Parks Partnerships is pursuing funding for nature recovery through a programme of projects set out in the Net Zero for Nature prospectus.
- National Parks UK has not met due to Covid but discussions are taking place on the future of the organisation, its role in the climate change Conference of the parties (COP26) due to be hosted by the UK in 2021, and the development of the Communications Unit.
- Exmoor was due to host the bi-ennial conference of National Parks UK in November 2021. Due to the uncertainty during CV19, it was agreed to postpone the conference. Work is underway to assess alternative models for a conference in 2022 which may or may not be held or hosted on Exmoor.
- Members and officers also continue to contribute to national and regional groups including the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Joint Committee. Three Expressions of Interest were submitted to the LEP's potential Natural Capital scheme in conjunction with Dartmoor National Park Authority.

Monitoring and Research: Our knowledge and understanding of Exmoor's special qualities is increased through monitoring and research to inform future decision making and delivery of our Ambitions

Highlights:

- An update of the State of the Park report is due in 2021, and plans are being drawn up to carry out the review in consultation with the Partnership Plan groups.
- The results from the Exmoor & District Deer Management Society deer count have been collated, with deer numbers settled at around 3,500. Concern around TB in deer is ongoing but the proposed local TB-in-deer panel has not yet met, either face to face or virtually, due to CV19 and it is hoped that a working group is able to meet in spring 2021.
- The 2020 Visitor Survey has been postponed to 2021 due to CV19. In the interim we ran a virtual visitor survey online ahead of the reopening of the hospitality sector to gauge visitor views on likelihood to visit and views post Covid as part of the Tourism Recovery work. This was published in July 2020.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES: Manage Corporate finances and diversify income streams

- The 2019/20 accounts were drafted and successfully passed external audit. We also achieved excellent for value for money. The revised budget for 2020/21 has been agreed by the Authority and we have begun modelling for the 2021/22 revenue budget.
- Income from the 'CareMoor for Exmoor' scheme has stalled due to the impact of CV19 and limited staff capacity. The total raised to date is a fraction of previous years following the high season, at less than £7k compared to nearly £40k this time last year.
- Considerable effort has been put into income generation and external funding. Authority agreement was secured to explore a range of income streams including car parking charges and planning fees. A working group has been established with members and officers to oversee the external funding strategy and development of a pipeline of funding projects. Progress on this has been delayed owing to lack of capacity (non-recruitment of Funding Officer post) and the need to respond to immediate funding opportunities. Bids and Expressions of Interest have been developed for the Green Recovery Challenge Fund, LEP Natural Capital, Kickstart job scheme and Low Carbon Skills Fund.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES: Work with communities, businesses and partners to deliver the National Park Partnership Plan and statutory purposes

- A number of Partnership Plan groups and advisory panels support delivery of the Partnership Plan. The groups normally meet twice a year, although the spring meetings of the groups were postponed due to CV19, but the autumn meetings are being held virtually. A progress report on delivery of the Partnership Plan will be produced in 2021, and plans for this are underway in discussion with lead officers and at partnership plan group meetings.

- ENPA continues to support the Exmoor Hill Farming Network which has established itself as a Community Interest Company and is going from strength to strength. In these difficult times, the EHFN has continued in its work to improve the viability and sustainability of Exmoor farming businesses through knowledge-transfer, peer-group support, training and co-operation to safeguard upland farming, rural employment and landscape management . The Network continues to be integral to the development and delivery of the Exmoor Tests & Trials for ELMS. Detailed information about the network can be found at <http://www.ehfn.org.uk/>

CORPORATE PRIORITIES: Develop and maintain effective and efficient services

Highlights:

- Performance of the planning service through the first two quarters has improved compared with previous figures which had resulted from reduced capacity, and the team continue to deliver a high quality service. Additional temporary resources have helped the team to improve performance and improvements continue to be made to ensure the new computer system assists the team
- Due to CV19 and staff illness, ENPA has been unable to offer opportunities for young people interested in a career with National Parks this year. Work experience placements and the Land & Property Intern were cancelled, and recruitment for a Conservation Intern was delayed. National Parks have jointly applied for funding for the Kick Start Scheme, giving 6 months employment to help people back into work. ENPA has identified 5 roles across its services that would be suitable.
- Due to CV19, the April Authority Meeting had to be cancelled, however since then all scheduled meetings have taken place virtually including Authority meetings, new Member inductions, Member Forums, and training.
- Following budgetary pressures, CV19 and shifting priorities, an organisational review is underway to ensure that the organisation is flexible, resilient, sustainable and able to meet future challenges and opportunities. The review will form the basis of the new Organisation Development Strategy and further research and consultation with staff will be undertaken.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES: Manage the Authority's Estate and operations

Highlights:

- An Asset review of the Authority's Estate is being undertaken, although this has not been progressed as quickly as hoped due to capacity and other priorities.
- Work on the review of the Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Learning has seen an improvement plan underway. Progress to date includes updates to nearly half of the rooms (new beds, flooring, redecoration etc), new flooring in the lounge and corridor, new equipment purchased for installation (large screen for upstairs classroom). Further improvements planned include improvement to wifi, possible accessibility improvements and better use of outdoor areas.
- Eight proposals are being progressed under Land Visioning. These are the landscape of the former Royal Forest, ENPA car parks, coastal woodlands and heritage, branding, Bye Common woodland, Exford tree nursery, circular walk at

Burrige, and leased in land. Scoping papers for these proposals have been drafted. Some of these proposals are the subject of funding bids that have been submitted. Detailed proposals are being advanced for individual carparks.

- Management of the ENPA woodland estate has focused on monitoring works completed over the previous quarter and planning works for the next quarter including Hawkcombe coppicing, invasive species control at Haddon Wood and Moor Wood, open space management, and targeted selective thinning. PlantLife works were suspended as the Plantlife team were furloughed but this has also now resumed with further works planned at Hawkridge and Hawkcombe. Detailed planning is being undertaken to develop new 10 ha woodland at Bye Hill and a tree nursery at Exford. Timber sales are on target with 213 m³ sold and 50m³ supplied to ENPA Depot. ENPA supplied oak from Burrige Wood for the Woodside Bridge.
- Work on the ENPA estate maintenance programme has included: condition surveys for 7-9 Fore St and the Sawmill completed by external building surveyors. Ashcombe building refurbishment planned and in the pipeline. Extension and repair of the main stock shed at Driver Farm in progress. Pinkery re-roofing works scheduled for summer 2021, prep work underway. Drainage and flood prevention work at the Warehouse completed. Minor maintenance work to several public toilet buildings completed.
- Several actions are underway in response to the climate emergency declaration, to move ENPA to net zero carbon emissions by 2030. This includes:
 - Electricity supply for all ENPA properties has moved to a green energy tariff.
 - Energy audits were carried out for Exmoor House and the Pavilion National Park Centre. Options to reduce energy use are being scoped out (such as installing secondary glazing and PV panels).
 - Energy Savings Trust is carrying out a green fleet review and options to move one of the pool cars to an electric vehicle are being costed. Plans to install EV charging points at Exmoor House progressed and planning permission secured.
 - The Somerset Electric Vehicle charge point strategy has been completed, including opportunities to install charge points in ENPA car parks (in Somerset), this is being taken forward through scoping work for individual ENPA car parks as part of land visioning.
 - Results from the staff travel to work survey done before Christmas put on hold due to lockdown and home working.
 - ENPA moved to paperless Authority meetings (although this has had to revert back to paper copies due to Covid virtual meetings). As part of our Authority papers and planning reports we include a section on the implications for the Climate Emergency response.
 - Webpage set up with ideas for actions local communities and individuals can take and explaining some of the work ENPA is undertaking
<https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/living-and-working/climate-action>.

- The National Parks UK climate change group is looking at data and metrics for reporting on carbon footprints, to develop a consistent baseline and monitoring system.
- The land visioning work, ELMS test and trial and nature recovery vision will help to identify opportunities for carbon storage and sequestration through peatland restoration, soil management, and tree planting / natural regeneration.
- ENPA is part of Devon and Somerset climate action groups. The Somerset Climate Action Plan is the process of being ratified by the County and District Councils and the Devon Climate Action Plan is due to go out to public consultation in December. The Devon solar together project – a PV group buying scheme for residents – was launched over the summer 2020.

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 December 2020

ANNUAL ESTATE REVIEW 2019-2020

Report of the Land and Property Manager

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

- (1) Give an update on the management of the Authority's estate for the period November 2019 to November 2020.
- (2) Look ahead to projects and works planned for 2021.

RECOMMENDATION: The Authority is asked to NOTE the content of the Estate Review.

Authority Priority:

- Broaden our income base to ensure sustainable delivery of National Park purposes.
- Manage Authority owned land in ways that will enhance the special qualities of Exmoor.

Legal Implications: The legal impact of the recommendation(s) of this report has been assessed as follows: None

Equality Implications: The equality impact of the recommendation(s) of this report has been assessed as follows:

- No disadvantage will be incurred as a result of belonging to a protected group as defined within the Equality Act 2010
- The recommendations have no implications under the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998

Financial and Risk Implications: The financial and risk implications of the recommendation(s) of this report have been assessed as follows:

- Financial: None
- Risk: None

Climate Change Response: Climate response implications are covered in Section 2.12 of the report.

Exmoor National Park Authority

Annual Estate Review 2019/20

Contents

1. Land Visioning Project
2. Key projects undertaken in 2019/20
3. Looking forward to 2021

1. LAND VISIONING PROJECT

1.1 Background

This process, led by the Head of Conservation & Access, began in late 2019. It has already been presented to Members, but to recap: the Authority owns nearly 5,000 hectares of land and has around 70 different properties on its asset register. There have been some significant achievements on the estate over the years, but these have been set against a background of minimal long-term focus and inadequate resources. The purpose of the project is to re-concentrate attention on our assets, exploring their potential and identifying longer term visions and objectives. It is especially appropriate to do this in the context of Defra's 25-year Environment Plan, the Glover Review and following the Authority's Climate Emergency declaration.

1.2 Approach

We adopted an initial, map-based and aspirational approach. We wanted to achieve a vision for the land in ENPA ownership and use the skills and knowledge of the people who know it best to inform our ambitions. To this end we ran three workshops; one with ENPA staff, one with Members and one for external stakeholders. Attendees were asked to study maps of all the properties and to write down their thoughts and suggestions on how the estate might be used to deliver the following:

- Nature enhancement
- Climate mitigation and resilience (including NFM, plant health etc)
- Engagement, audiences etc (ENPA land as a 'gateway to Exmoor')
- Income generation
- Enhancing all NP Purposes (heritage and landscape)
- Volunteering
- Extending access (ethnic diversity etc)
- General links and ecological networks – working with partners, neighbours and stakeholders to maximise the positive impact of our land ownership
- Addressing the 'Glover agenda'

The similarities in the output from each session were remarkable and have been distilled into 8 priority areas:

1. Improvements to ENPA car parks
2. Addressing the challenges of recovering nature and climate change mitigation in the former royal forest of Exmoor
3. Enabling access to heritage and better habitat connectivity within ENPA's coastal holdings.
4. Review of ENPA branding and signage
5. Tree nursery at Exford
6. Woodland creation at Bye Common, Winsford
7. A circular walk at Burr ridge, Dulverton
8. Review all leased-in land

Clearly these vary substantially in scale and complexity. Some are relatively straightforward, and others will require landscape scale change.

1.3 **Next Steps**

The Head of Conservation & Access is working on scoping paper to set out the way forward with these proposals. However, there is some urgency in some of them. In response to the need to improve income generation, we have made a start on the car parks already (see more detail below). Work on developing the tree nursery at Exford is also underway.

2. **KEY PROJECTS IN 2019/20**

2.1 **Resurvey of Mine Workings**

Last year's report mentioned that the historic mine shafts and adits excavated by Frederic Knight were to be re-surveyed by a firm of mining consultants. The original survey, conducted in 1995 by the Exmoor Mines Research Group, was felt to be out of date in terms of its recommendations. Cornwall Consultants carried out their fieldwork in November 2019 and their report arrived just before Christmas. Recommendations range from improvements in signage and fencing for some sites, to the provision of bespoke grilles to others in the longer term. The pandemic slowed down our response, but these recommendations are being actioned now.

2.2 **Driver Farm**

2.2.1 Last year's report also detailed the planned repair/extension of the portal frame stock building at Driver. Our proposals received planning permission in June 2020, but work was delayed until September by the presence of nesting birds. It has now been completed.

2.2.2 In November 2019 local building surveyors Underwood Wright carried out a condition survey of the farmhouse as part of quantifying works for which both landlord and tenant are responsible. The landlord's works were due to be undertaken in 2020 but the pandemic interrupted this. It is now programmed for next year (see below).

2.3 **North Hill**

2.3.1 Discussions and preparations for a joint management plan with the National Trust, to cover both bodies' landholdings at North Hill, have stalled as a result of Coronavirus. Our objectives are very similar and there is significant potential for co-operation. We hope to resume these shortly.

2.3.2 The adverse possession issue mentioned in last year's report is nearing a close. A former owner of an adjoining property had extended their driveway onto the Authority's land and erected a building on it. The claim was defeated, and the new owners agreed in principal to buy the small land parcel at the foot of Woodcombe Brake. The area and price have been agreed and solicitors are close to concluding the transfer.

2.4 **The Chains**

The Higher-Level Stewardship agreement for the Chains (in-hand moorland), due to expire in June this year, was extended to June 2021. Natural England has indicated that a further 12-month extension will be offered by the end of December.

2.5 **Woodland**

2.5.1 The Authority owns and/or manages about 570 ha (1,410 acres) of woodland.

2.5.2 November 2019 marked the half-way point in the Authority's 5-year Countryside Stewardship agreement, which has been the Woodland team's main focus since January 2017. At that point last year we were also 12 months into an HLF funded partnership with Plant Life and on the brink of a devastating tree-health episode which will dominate the team's work for several years to come. Other ongoing work has included routine Tree Risk Assessments, riparian trees and woody material in rivers, woodland estate works and whole range of surveys, monitoring and volunteer and community works including the Woodcombe Community Woodland Project.

2.5.3 **Ash Dieback**

Through the summer of 2019 the progress of Ash Dieback (ADB) in the Exmoor landscape was becoming apparent. From data obtained from the National Forest Inventory (NFI) which estimates the ash population in the National Park to be between 600,000 and 800,000 trees, 95% of which are likely to be severely affected, it was clear we needed a comprehensive plan to deal with the issue of the estimated 40,000 ash trees on the ENPA Estate.

We identified over 2,000 trees in high priority hazard zones and categorised them according to risk and size. Data supplied by Devon County Council estimated an average cost of £150 per tree to fell or dismantle. Even £100/tree average which may be more realistic puts the full cost at close to £200k. As the disease progresses arboricultural options become increasingly limited making intervention more costly. Contractor availability will be a significant operational constrain for landowners who have not developed a secure strategy to deal with this.

2,000 trees represent around 5% of the population of ash trees on the ENPA estate. The remaining 95% will remain and the disease allowed to run its course. 95% of these are expected to die but those that don't may possess useful inheritable resistance.

Working with Devon County Council Procurement Team we tendered for a 3 year plus optional 12- month contract to fell all 2000 plus trees as they approach a pre-determined risk threshold based on regular surveys by the contractor and ENPA. We received 75 expressions of interest, 15 firm bids and were able to appoint Devon Tree Services as our main contractor for 3 plus 1 years from whom we will receive priority cover.

2.5.4 **Site Works**

- Burridge Wood
Hazard trees and ADB – out-with the main ADB programme. Light thinning releasing timber for Woodside Bridge. High pruning to improve form and value.
- Paddons/Weir Cleeve
Major ADB programme at Newgate Plantation – out-with main ADB programme, hazard trees around Paddons House.
- Barle Valley
Plant-Life supported works at Brewers Castle incl re-planting sessile oaks and protecting oak regeneration. Targeted beech-seedling removal Hawkridge Riparian trees and woody material through Danes Brook.
- Tarr Steps
Woody material removal, Plant-Life monitoring.
- Simonsbath
Major ADB works at Ashcombe and White Rocks Cottage, hazard tree works in Birchcleeve, Sawmill and roadside.
- Culbone
Veteran tree management in Yarner Wood. Landscape works to designed landscape. Continued rhododendron control.
- Hawkcombe
Woody material removal, veteran tree management and recruiting new pollards, removal of remaining larch from Peep-Out Plantation, veteran tree management in Colescombe Wood (Plant-Life).
- North Hill
Thinning cedar as part of CCF Plan, in Moor Wood, weeding replanted trees. Rhododendron control at Greenaleigh. Woodcombe Community Woodland.
- Haddon Hill
Thinning Hadborough Plantation.
- Bye Common Wood
Weeding and tube removal. Woodland Creation Plan and submission of grant application for 12 ha of new woodland.

2.5.5 **Hazard Trees**

The annual hazard tree inspections over the entire ENPA estate including woodlands, car parks, centres and other facilities was completed, and all actions and recommendations followed through.

2.5.6 **Timber Sales**

Timber sales secured so far in 2020/21 have brought in just over £11,000. This is mostly in the form of firewood but includes chip-wood and pine and western red cedar for fencing.

2.6 **Malmsmead**

The Authority has the benefit of a lease of some land at Malmsmead (expires 2029). In early spring this year the Landlord's representatives sought a surrender of part to enable them to offer the land to the National Trust with vacant possession. The District Valuer was asked to value the parcel and the parties settled on the figure he calculated. The transfer completed on the last day of March this year. The Authority continues to lease a small area of the land originally comprised in the lease, part of which was partially built on by the Landlord several years ago. The 'building site' land is being offered for sale and the selling agent has been informed that any prospective buyer will need to seek a surrender of the Authority's remaining leasehold interest.

2.7 **Land at Exmoor Forest**

Exmoor Forest Farms' Farm Business Tenancy reaches the end of its fixed term in September 2021 and their agent has served notice to terminate.

This is to allow the renegotiation of terms as the business' HLS expires and it enters a new Countryside Stewardship agreement. EFF retains the unexpired term of a 40-year grazing licence of the land, which commenced in April 1992.

2.8 **Weir Cleave**

2.8.1 Further rock-slope stabilisation works were carried out in December 2019. These represented a second tranche in the area behind some workshop buildings in Northmoor Road.

2.8.2 The next periodic inspection of all managed slopes is scheduled for March 2021 (see below).

2.9 **Larkbarrow**

October this year saw the first phase of trials to restore Larkbarrow's two SSSI units to favourable status by restoring functional hydrology to the blanket bog. The re-wetting process can have material impacts on the moorland landscape and on archaeological evidence of past use - both recognised special qualities of the National Park. The methods being trialled to restore functional hydrology have been carefully balanced against their impact on these qualities.

The approach chosen involved the Field Services Team and the Farming & Land Management Officer installing 13 small wooden dams. These were backfilled with hazel bundles to slow the flow of water and trap silt. All materials were untreated; the slabwood used for the dams is a side-product of ENPA milling and the sisal-tied hazel bundles a by-product of coppicing.

Given the history of the site, the team was assisted by a specialist in unexploded ordnance, commissioned to carry out a survey of the area ahead of the work. Initial indications, following installation of the dams, are positive. The process will be assessed throughout the winter and the methodology refined as necessary, all with a view to continuing the restoration at Swap Hill and other prioritised areas at Larkbarrow.

2.10 **Simonsbath Sawmill**

Our licensees at the Sawmill, Three Atop Woodland Management, were granted a further 12 month licence to occupy in July this year.

2.11 **Land at Cutcombe Market**

The disposal of the Authority's land parcel at Cutcombe livestock market site was delayed by the lockdown but is expected to complete during November.

2.12 **Climate Response**

- 2.12.1 The Authority's climate declaration in 2019 set out a commitment to work towards the Authority being carbon neutral by 2030.

Energy use in ENPA's buildings form a significant part of the Authority's carbon footprint. As part of the internal response to this, an external specialist was asked to look at the energy used by Exmoor House and the Lynmouth Pavilion, the two buildings which use most electricity. His report didn't contain any great surprises, but it did recommend a number of energy saving projects, particularly at Exmoor House. These include installation of more secondary glazing, changing all light fittings to LED (we already had a programme of gradual replacement), additional internal insulation and changing the heating system from night storage heaters to a 'wet system' powered by a renewable energy system such as a heat pump or biomass boiler.

- 2.12.2 Further work is planned to look at potential for energy savings at other ENPA properties, and external funding is being sought for this, including through the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund. This work will add to previous actions taken to reduce emissions from buildings include installation of renewable energy at a number of buildings, increased insulation, and the move to a green tariff for electricity at all our properties.

- 2.12.3 The Land Visioning work being undertaken on the Authority's Estate is also considering opportunities to contribute to the climate response through improved carbon storage and sequestration in soils, peatland and woodland.

2.13 **Condition Surveys**

Several building condition surveys have been commissioned over the last 12 months to improve our understanding of repair needs and priorities. In addition to Driver Farm, we have had them carried out at Simonsbath Sawmill, 7-9 Fore St (Dulverton) and all public toilets.

We already had these assessments for Exmoor House, the Lynmouth Pavilion and the Pinkery Centre. All set out recommendations for works, categorised as urgent, year 1, year 2 etc and this guides our future maintenance programme.

2.14 **Minor Works**

The condition survey of the public toilets revealed that most are in good order (the Ashcombe building being an exception) and in need of only minor maintenance work. This work was 'packaged' by one of the Facilities Officers according to geographical area and two contracts were let in late summer this year (after a competitive process). All works are now complete.

2.15 **White Rock Cottage**

- 2.15.1 The refurbishment of the building reached practical completion at the end of March this year, although a few snagging issues remain.

Underfloor heating was delayed by the need to upgrade the power supply in Ashcombe. The lockdown prevented Western Power Distribution from doing their

part until mid-August and a change in electricity supplier further complicated matters. At time of writing we are waiting for a heating engineer to connect and commission the system.

- 2.15.2 Whilst the final stages of refurbishing the building have been taking place, the Head of Conservation and Access has been in discussions with the Simonsbath and Exmoor Heritage Trust (S&EHT), regarding a 99-year lease. These talks continue in a very positive vein and we expect to bring a formal proposal to Members in early 2021.

3. LOOKING FORWARD TO 2021

3.1 Car Parks

- 3.1.1 Members will recall the Chief Executive's presentation on income generation (September 2020). As a consequence of that paper and as mentioned under Land Visioning above, we have started developing plans to improve the corporate 'welcome' and appearance of a number of our car parks, together with the introduction of parking charges. We anticipate installing ticket machines at Ashcombe and the Valley of Rocks by Easter 2021. Other sites, including Haddon Hill, are under consideration as a second phase.
- 3.1.2 A second (contactless) ticket machine is proposed at Tarr Steps in order to improve throughput in peak periods and reduce losses from equipment breakdown. We propose to site it in the lower car parking area and a planning application will be brought forward shortly.
- 3.1.3 The Facilities team is trialling a web-based system for monitoring car park ticket machines. This allows us to see when non-contactless machines need emptying or when ticket rolls are running low. It can also send text alerts when the machines fail. This system is likely to prove invaluable as we roll out charging in other car parks.

3.2 Pinkery Centre

The 2019 condition survey of Pinkery recommended re-roofing the original farmhouse in years 2-3. This has been scheduled for summer 2021. The work planned includes the insertion of some conservation rooflights and creating a vaulted ceiling to the first floor classroom. These aspects of the work will require planning permission and an application will be submitted during the next few months.

3.3 Driver Farm

Maintenance and repair of the farmhouse and traditional buildings, as identified in the 2019 condition survey. Work will include dismantling the rear chimney stack to first floor landing level and capping and the insertion of a French drain along the north elevation, all to resolve a long-standing damp issue. Further works, including full external redecoration, are due over the next 3-4 years.

3.4 Ashcombe Building

The principal works here are to: replace the roof covering (with associated joinery repairs), replace four windows and two doors, replace eaves timber cladding, repair rainwater goods and refurbish the public toilet part of the building.

3.5 **Blackpits**

Cyclical external repairs and redecoration.

3.6 **Simonsbath Sawmill**

3.6.1 A condition survey (external fabric) was carried out in July of this year. Generally, the building is in quite good order. Tasks flagged as urgent include some minor roof and guttering repairs, replacement of one window and some areas of re-rendering - all estimated at £9,500. Work recommended for year 1 (next year) amounts to a further £13,500.

3.6.2 There is concern in the village about cars parking on the bend opposite Pound Cottage and there may be scope for the Authority to help alleviate the problem by creating parking space at the Sawmill. We will be considering the feasibility of this over the coming months, in liaison with SCC Highways, the Parish Council and others.

3.7 **Weir Cleeve**

The next inspection check of all managed slopes is scheduled for March 2021. We have been advised to allow for 2-3 days on site - 2 days for checks plus 1 further day for light maintenance - trimming vegetation regrowth, etc. It is possible that the survey will recommend further rock stabilisation in the areas already worked on.

3.8 **7-9 Fore Street, Dulverton**

Cyclical external repairs and redecoration.

3.9 **Exe Plain**

The Exmoor Mires Partnership has brought forward a proposal to carry out further peatland restoration work in the area of Exe Plain. Proposed works include ditch blocking, increasing the height of existing ditch-blocks and woodland creation. ENPA's response is being led by the Conservation team in consultation with the Land & Property Manager and our farm tenant.

3.10 **Woodland**

3.10.1 **Countryside Stewardship**

2021 will be the final full year of the CS Agreement which is due to terminate in December 2021. At this stage we are not aware of a scheme to directly replace it although DEFRA have made a commitment to ensure some form of continuity. The work programme for the next 14 months or so will follow a similar pattern to completed works.

3.10.2 **Ash Die Back**

ADB works will continue. Hawkcombe Wood is emerging as a major issue with upwards of 400 trees requiring attention. We have submitted a Felling Licence and TPO application (which will come before Members for approval) because this work exceeds our current permissions.

3.10.3 **Other Land**

We are progressing with plans to create a new woodland on Authority land at Bye Hill. These plans aren't finalised yet but will build on the very successful Millennium Wood at Larcombe Foot. We will be applying for a Woodland Creation Grant for 10 – 12 ha of new woodland.

3.10.4 Tree Nursery

We are also planning a small native tree nursery on land at Exford. In due course this may produce several thousand trees per year for projects on our own land and to supply to other community projects. This project has stimulated a lot of interest and we hope to get funding to begin its development in the final few weeks of 2020.

Matt Harley
Land & Property Manager
November 2020

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 December 2020

Rights of Way and Access Annual Report for 2019-2020

Report of the Head of Conservation and Access

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT: To present to Members our Public Rights of Way and Access Report for work completed between April 2019 and March 2020.

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee is recommended to NOTE the report.

Authority Priority: Well managed Recreation and Access; Develop and maintain efficient and effective services; Working with communities, businesses and partners to deliver the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan and statutory purposes.

Legal and Equality Implications: There are no implications as no decisions are being made.

Consideration has been given to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and an assessment of the implications of the recommendations of this report is as follows: There are no implications as no decisions are being recommended.

Financial and Risk Implications: There are no implications as no decisions are being made.

Climate Response: Heavy rainfall and flash flood events are occurring more frequently, which can result in path erosion and hazards from fallen trees. Warmer, wetter summers and longer growing season also lead to the need for more paring to keep routes open and accessible. The report details how these impacts are being managed.

1. INTRODUCTION

Our Rights of Way and Access Annual Report for 2019-20 describes the work carried out by Exmoor National Park Authority to maintain and improve the public access network across the National Park over the 12-month period from April 2019 to March 2020. The Report is available on the Authority's website via this link:

https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0031/347638/ROW-annual-report-2019-20.pdf

Some highlights include:

- Achieved an 'Open and Easy to Use' assessment score of 92% for our 1000km Public Rights of Way network, just short of our 95% target.
- Successfully completed 8 major path repairs.
- Our Rangers surveyed 42% of the path network to assess signage and furniture, including 143 bridge inspections.
- Our Field Services Team made and installed 290 signposts, 157 gates and 6 bridges. This year they cleared 233 fallen trees and cut back vegetation along 159km of paths. They also cleared 1023 drains along with a range of surface repairs.

- We resolved 1048 faults, though only 56% were resolved within 3 months falling short of our 80% target.
- Our Path Watcher volunteers carried out inspections and minor repairs in 18 Parishes, achieving a total of 450 hours of effort.
- We have carried out 53 legal events and resolved 9 historical 'off line' path issues.
- We have achieved a range of improvements including a new Public Bridleway at Martinhoe and 5 stiles have been replaced with easier alternatives.

Dan Barnett
Access and Recreation Manager
November 2020

Background papers on which this report, or an important part of it are based, constitute the list of background papers required by Section 100 D (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to be open to members of the public comprise:

- Public Rights of Way and Access Annual Report 2019/20

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 December 2020

AUTHORITY MEETINGS SCHEDULE FOR 2021 AND 2022

Report of the Head of Strategy and Performance

Purpose of the report: To present to Members a schedule of meetings of the Authority and its Committees for 2021 and 2022.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. To confirm the Authority Meetings Schedule for 2021, which now includes additional dates to be used for Member training and briefings if required, attached at Appendix 1 to this report.
2. To adopt a schedule of meetings of the Authority and its Committees for 2022, attached at Appendix 2 to this report.

Authority Priority: Develop and maintain effective and efficient services.

Legal and Equality Implications: The Authority's Standing Orders provide that each year the Authority shall approve a calendar of meetings of the Authority and its Committees and Sub Committees.

The equality and human rights impact of the recommendation of this report has been assessed as having no adverse impact on any particular group or individual.

Financial and Risk Implications: The Authority's meeting arrangements are intended to make best use of member time and resources while ensuring Authority business is dealt with efficiently and in a manner open to public scrutiny.

Climate Response: As part of the action plan for the Climate Emergency response, the Authority had moved to paperless meetings from February 2020. However, the coronavirus pandemic has meant that we have had to revert to paper copies to enable Members to refer to them during virtual meetings.

1. 2021 AUTHORITY MEETINGS SCHEDULE

- 1.1 At its meeting on 3 December 2019, the Authority approved a schedule of meetings for the Authority and its Committees for 2021.
- 1.2 Due to the coronavirus pandemic, all meetings of the Authority since the end of March 2020 have had to be held via video conferencing software. At this stage we do not know when it will be possible to resume in-person meetings.
- 1.3 For health and wellbeing reasons, it has become evident that the normal practice of combining the formal Authority meeting with member training/briefing opportunities and informal member working groups on the same day, is not ideal for virtual meetings.

- 1.4 Therefore it has been proposed that we identify an additional reserve date each month, which can be used for Members' Forums, training/briefing opportunities and informal member working groups. If there are no pressing matters to discuss, the date will not be used.
- 1.5 A revised meetings schedule for 2021 is therefore attached at Appendix 1, with all additional dates shown in red.

2. 2022 AUTHORITY MEETINGS SCHEDULE

- 2.1 To aid forward planning, a draft meetings schedule for 2022 has also been prepared and is attached at Appendix 2. This schedule follows the usual pattern of Authority meetings and other Committees and includes dates for member study tours and training.
- 2.2 It is hoped that we will have resumed in-person meetings by 2022 and that the monthly 'Exmoor Tuesday' will have reverted to the practice of combining the formal Authority meeting in the morning, with member training/briefing opportunities and informal member working groups in the afternoon.
- 2.3 However, given the wide-ranging nature of the Authority's work, it is proposed that we continue to identify an additional reserve date each month, should this be required for additional Member meetings.
- 2.4 As is usual practice, the meeting schedules have been shared with the constituent County and District Councils.

Clare Reid
Head of Strategy and Performance

Judy Coles
Corporate Support Officer

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES 2021**

Day	Date	Time	Meeting
JANUARY			
Friday	8 January	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
Tuesday	12 January	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting (Reserve Date)
Tuesday	19 January	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members’ Forum / Training etc
Friday	29 January	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
FEBRUARY			
Tuesday	2 February	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	16 February	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members’ Forum / Training etc
Friday	26 February	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
MARCH			
Tuesday	2 March	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	2 March	pm	Member Obligatory Planning Training
Tuesday	9 March	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members’ Forum / Training etc
Thursday	18 March	10.30am	Exmoor Consultative & Parish Forum
APRIL			
Thursday	1 April ¹	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
Tuesday	6 April	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	20 April	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members’ Forum / Training etc
Friday	30 April	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
MAY			
Tuesday	4 May	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	11 May	10.00am	Standards Committee meeting
Tuesday	18 May	all day	Member Study Tour
Friday	28 May	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
JUNE			
Tuesday	1 June	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Thursday	10 June	7.00pm	Exmoor Consultative & Parish Forum
Tuesday	15 June	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members’ Forum / Training etc

¹ The standard site visit reserve date of Friday 2 April is Good Friday.

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES 2021**

JULY			
Friday	2 July	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
Tuesday	6 July	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority Annual Meeting
Friday	23 July	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members' Forum / Training etc
Friday	23 July	10.00am	Final Accounts Committee
Friday	30 July	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
AUGUST			
Tuesday	3 August	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting (Reserve Date)
Tuesday	17 August	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members' Forum / Training etc
SEPTEMBER			
Friday	3 September	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
Tuesday	7 September	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	7 September	pm	Members' Obligatory Planning Training
Thursday	16 September	7.00pm	Exmoor Consultative & Parish Forum
Tuesday	21 September	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members' Forum / Training etc
OCTOBER			
Friday	1 October	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
Tuesday	5 October	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	12 October	all day	Member Study Tour
Friday	29 October	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
NOVEMBER			
Tuesday	2 November	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	9 November	10.00am	Standards Committee meeting
Tuesday	9 November	tbc	Reserve Date – Members' Forum / Training etc
Thursday	18 November	10.30am	Exmoor Consultative & Parish Forum
DECEMBER			
Friday	3 December	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
Tuesday	7 December	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	14 December	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members' Forum / Training etc

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES 2022**

Day	Date	Time	Meeting
JANUARY			
Friday	7 January	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
Tuesday	11 January	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting (Reserve Date)
Tuesday	18 January	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members’ Forum / Training etc
Friday	28 January	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
FEBRUARY			
Tuesday	1 February	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	15 February	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members’ Forum / Training etc
Friday	25 February	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
MARCH			
Tuesday	1 March	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	1 March	pm	Member Obligatory Planning Training
Tuesday	8 March	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members’ Forum / Training etc
Thursday	17 March	10.30am	Exmoor Consultative & Parish Forum
APRIL			
Friday	1 April	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
Tuesday	5 April	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	12 April	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members’ Forum / Training etc
Friday	29 April	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
MAY			
Tuesday	3 May	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	10 May	all day	Member Study Tour
Tuesday	17 May	10.00am	Standards Committee meeting
JUNE			
Friday	10 June	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
Tuesday	14 June¹	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	21 June	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members’ Forum / Training etc
Thursday	23 June	7.00pm	Exmoor Consultative & Parish Forum

¹ Date moved as Thu, 2 & Fri, 3 June are Bank Holidays to celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES 2022**

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Tuesday	6 September	pm	Members' Obligatory Planning Training
Thursday	15 September	7.00pm	Exmoor Consultative & Parish Forum
Tuesday	20 September	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members' Forum / Training etc
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Friday	28 October	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
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Tuesday	1 November	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	8 November	10.00am	Standards Committee meeting
Tuesday	8 November	tbc	Reserve Date – Members' Forum / Training etc
Thursday	17 November	10.30am	Exmoor Consultative & Parish Forum
DECEMBER			
Friday	2 December	am	Pre-Meeting Planning Site Visit (Reserve Date)
Tuesday	6 December	10.00am	Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
Tuesday	13 December	10.00am	Reserve Date – Members' Forum / Training etc