



**EXMOOR**  
**NATIONAL PARK**

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20 October 2022

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

**To: All Members of the Exmoor National Park Authority**

A meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority will be held in the **Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton** on **Tuesday, 1 November 2022 at 10.00am.**

**Please Note:** The Authority is currently trialling a new meeting format to better manage Authority business, so Agenda items relating to the Authority's role as sole **local planning authority** for the National Park area, including determination of planning applications, will commence at **1.30 pm.**

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](mailto:jcoles@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)).

The meeting will be **recorded**. By entering the Authority's Committee Room and speaking during Public Speaking you are consenting to being recorded. We will make the recording 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](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)).

Sarah Bryan  
Chief Executive

## **A G E N D A**

The meeting will be chaired by Mr R Milton, Chairperson of the Authority.

### **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 meetings of the Authority held on 6 September 2022 (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.

6. **Allocation of Legacy Funding:** To consider the report of the Head of Conservation and Access (Item 6)

7. **Membership of National Parks England:** To consider the report of the Chief Executive (Item 7)

8. **Revised Budget for 2022/2023:** To consider the report of the Chief Finance Officer (Item 8)

9. **Treasury Management Mid-Year Report:** To consider the report of the Chief Finance Officer (Item 9)

10. **UK National Parks' Conference, Exmoor 2022:** To consider the report of the Chief Executive (Item 10)

11. **Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum:** To receive and note the meeting notes from the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum held on 15 September 2022 (Item 11)

### **12. Personnel Update**

#### **Starters**

- 04/09/22 – Izzy Burns – Learning and Engagement Assistant – one-year fixed term contract
- 27/09/2022 – Joanne Penney – Planning and Customer Support Assistant – two-year fixed term contract
- 10/10/2022 – Philip Wright – Historic Environment Officer (SWPP) – fixed term contract until 31/03/2025

#### **Leavers**

- 04/09/2022 – Joe White – Principal Planning Officer - resignation

#### **End of seasonal contracts**

- 30/10/2022 – Lisa Clarke – Information Advisor (Dunster)

- 30/10/2022 – Peter Haddock – Information Advisor (Lynmouth)
- 30/10/2022 – Shelley Trace – Information Advisor (Dulverton)

### 13. Any Other Business of Urgency

**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 J Pugsley, Deputy Chairperson (Planning). If the Deputy Chairperson (Planning) is absent, the Deputy Chairperson of the Authority shall be preside.

- 14. Appeal:** To note the decision of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to allow the Appeal and grant planning permission for change of use of main building to single dwellinghouse at Martinhoe Manor, Woody Bay, Parracombe, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 4QX
- 15. Development Management:** To consider the report of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development on the following:-

Agenda Item	Application No.	Description	Page Nos.
15.1	62/41/22/001	Proposed siting of 5 no. timber and canvas glamping safari tents, permeable parking / turning area with 6 no. parking bays, with a double EV charging point, recycling / waste facilities, associated footpaths, landscaping, composting toilets and an underground water treatment plant for drainage treatment – Manor Farm, Lynton, Devon, EX35 6LD	1 – 16
15.2	6/27/22/118	Proposed variation of conditions 2 and 4 of approved application 6/27/16/102 for the installation of external Cedral fibre cement cladding in place of red cedar timber cladding – Keal Rise, Hawkcombe, Porlock, Minehead, TA24 8QW	17 – 26
15.3	6/27/22/112	Proposed replacement of 13no. windows and 3no. doors – Retrospective – The Culbone, Porlock, Minehead, TA24 8JW	27 – 36
15.4	6/13/22/107	Application under Regulation 3 of The Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for the proposed erection of potting shed, covered store, ground mounted solar panels, planting beds and associated works – Exford Woodland Nursery, Exford, TA24 7PP	37 – 54
15.5	6/9/22/102DC	Discharge of condition 3 (written scheme of investigation) of approved application 6/9/21/107 – Varle Hill, Land by Cattle Grid – Easting 289029, Northing 132085	55 - 58

**16. Application Decisions Delegated to the Chief Executive:** To note the applications determined by the Chief Executive under delegated powers ([Item 16](#)).

**17. Site Visits:** To arrange any site visits agreed by the Committee (the reserve date being Friday, 2 December 2022 (am)).

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, 6 September 2022 at 10.00am in the Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton.

#### PRESENT

Mr R Milton (Chairperson)  
Mr S J Pugsley (Deputy Chairperson Planning)

Mrs L Blanchard	Mr A Milne
Mr M Ellicott	Mrs F Nicholson
Mr S Griffiths	Mr J Patrinos
Mr J Holtom	Miss E Stacey
Dr M Kelly	Mr N Thwaites
Mr M Kravis	Dr S Warren
Mrs C Lawrence	Mrs P Webber
Mr E Ley	Mr J Yabsley

Apologies for absence were received from Miss A V Davis, Mr D Elson, Mrs F Smith and Mr V White

#### 56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

- In relation to Item 11.1 – Application No. 62/11/22/006 – Proposed change of use of land and lean-to to a mixed use of agricultural/horticultural and residential, together with the stationing of touring caravan within timber framed structure - Land North East of Higher Tippacott Farm, Brendon, Lynton, EX35 6PU
  - Mr J Holtom declared a personal interest due to his dealings with the Applicant in relation to Brendon Commons Council and advised he would withdraw from the meeting when this item was considered.
  - All Members declared having been lobbied.

#### 57. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The Chairperson advised that Mr Dave Knight had stepped down as Chair of the Exmoor Hill Farming Network but would continue to be involved as a Director. On behalf of the Authority, Mr Milton thanked Mr Knight for the important contribution he had made to the network since its inception and advised that Mr Ian May had taken up the role of Chair.
- The Authority also noted that Mrs Rachel Thomas would be stepping down as Chair of The Exmoor Society at their AGM on 17 September. The Chief Executive paid tribute to Mrs Thomas for the work she had done for Exmoor over the years and extended her thanks both personally and on behalf of the Authority.
- A letter had been received from Lord Benyon, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at Defra thanking Exmoor National Park Authority for all their efforts in the implementation of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.

- The meeting was advised that all National Park Authority Chairs shared grave concerns over the funding future for National Parks.
- The Authority was looking forward to hosting the UK National Parks Conference from 27 – 29 September, based in Dunster. On behalf of Members, the Chairperson thanked Dan James and Katrina Munroe for all their hard work to implement the arrangements for the conference.

## 58. MINUTES

- Confirmation:** The Minutes of the Authority's meeting held on 2 August 2022 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
- Matters arising:** There were no matters arising

59. **PUBLIC SPEAKING:** See Minute 65 for details of public speakers

## 60. RISK MANAGEMENT

The Authority considered the report of the Head of Finance and Operations

### The Authority's Consideration

The Committee thanked the Head of Finance and Operations for a comprehensive report and presentation. In relation to a question about the inclusion of the new Landscape and National Trails Partnership on the Strategic Risk Register, it was clarified that this was an evolving area and therefore it was unknown what obligations, targets or outcomes might be required of the Authority from that partnership.

A number of queries were raised by Members, but it was considered they would be better discussed at Members' Forum, after the Authority meeting concluded, when the Head of Finance and Operations would be setting out the timetable for further discussions over the current budgetary situation.

For the public record it was confirmed that Members' Forum meetings were informal, non-decision making meetings, which afforded the opportunity for discussions to take place about items of importance that were likely to come before the full Authority in due course. The meetings enabled Members to understand the background to such items and allowed Officers to hear preliminary views.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To note that the annual review of Risk Management has been carried out.
- (2) To approve the Health, Safety & Welfare Policy set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- (3) To approve the Risk Register set out in Appendix 2 to the report.
- (4) To note that the Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery Plan has been reviewed.

## 61. DEFRA CONSULTATION ON DEER MANAGEMENT

The Authority considered the report of the Chief Executive

### **The Authority's Consideration**

The Committee noted that due to the short four-week consultation period and response deadline of 2 September, it had not been possible for the Chief Executive's proposed response to be formally debated by the Authority prior to its submission.

Whilst supportive of the responses to the various questions posed in the consultation document, the Authority Committee were keen for the Chief Executive to pass on the following additional comments and observations to Defra on their behalf:-

**Question 6** – Members considered the consultation appeared to be limited in scope and that deer management needed to be appropriate for the specific area of the country being considered, to avoid unintended consequences to protected landscapes. Members also felt that it should take into account other deer related issues such as TB and the impact of herbivores as a whole.

**Question 8** – night shooting would substantially increase the chances of a wounded animal suffering a lingering death

**Question 14** – Members considered that anyone culling deer should have a DMQ Level 1 certificate as a minimum and that no one should accept a carcass from someone without that certificate. However, it was also noted that poaching would unfortunately continue to take place regardless of any standards introduced.

The Authority Committee suggested that the Chief Executive should maintain a watching brief in relation to any legislation which may arise as a result of the consultation and requested that this be added to the formal resolution.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To note the contents of the report.
- (2) To delegate to the Chief Executive to advise Defra of any further comments raised by Members of Exmoor National Park Authority.
- (3) To request that the Chief Executive maintains a watching brief in relation to any legislation which may arise as a result of the consultation.

**62. PERSONNEL UPDATE:** The Authority noted the recent staff changes as set out on the agenda and wished to formally record its thanks to Joe White, Principal Planning Officer for his work on behalf of the Authority over many years.

**63. ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF URGENCY:** There was none

The meeting closed for recess at 11.16 pm

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**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)

The meeting reconvened at 1.00 pm

Dr S Warren left the meeting

Mr J Holtom joined the meeting

## APPEALS

64. The Committee noted the **decision** of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to dismiss the Appeal in relation to an Enforcement Notice – Land at Whitefield, Brayford, Barnstaple, EX32 7QW

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Mr J Holtom left the meeting room prior to the Officer presentation

65. **Application No: 62/11/22/006**  
**Location: Land North East of Higher Tippacott Farm, Brendon, Lynton, EX35 6PU**  
**Proposal: Change of use of land and lean-to to a mixed use of agricultural/ horticultural and residential, together with the stationing of touring caravan within timber framed structure**

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

### Public Speaking:

- 1) Mrs S Adams, Chair of Brendon & Countisbury Parish Council
- 2) Mr T Williams, on behalf of the Applicant

### The Authority's Consideration

The Authority Committee noted that Planning Officers recommended the application be refused as they considered it was contrary to a number of policies contained within the Exmoor National Park Authority Local Plan and to paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Whilst mindful of the Officer recommendation, the Committee were also very aware of the sensitive personal circumstances of the Applicant and his strong desire to continue living in his home. A number of Members expressed deep concerns about the impact the stress of being required to move, against his wishes, may have on the Applicant's overall health and wellbeing given his advanced age.

Whilst recognising the extraordinarily difficult decision that was before Members, the Head of Planning advised caution in relation to the Committee's decision making, to ensure that, should they be minded to grant approval, they considered the personal circumstances of this particular application to be so unique that they were unlikely to be repeated elsewhere across Exmoor.

Having taking into consideration all the information presented, it was the view of the majority of the Authority Committee that, due to the advanced age and health of the Applicant, the likelihood that no one else of a similar age would wish to live in such a setting, and that the Application site once removed would not leave a permanent impact on the landscape, planning permission should be granted.

The Committee requested that the grant of planning permission should be personal to the Applicant, the development should be removed once no longer required by the Applicant, and a condition should be included to require the removal of the Perspex used on the walls and roof of the development and replaced with a material approved by Planning Officers.

**RESOLVED:** To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

(1) The development hereby approved shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the plans and details submitted with the application:

- Location Plan - Drawing no. PL4697/1
- Block Plan - Drawing no. PL4697/2
- Elevations and Plan - Drawing no. PL4697/2

**Reason:** For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the works accord with the approved details.

(2) The residential caravan stationed within an agricultural storage building and associated development, hereby permitted shall only be used for residential purposes by the Applicant (Mr Tom Ridd), unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** Due to the personal circumstances of the applicant the use of the site for residential purposes is considered acceptable for the applicant for as long as they require.

(3) The development hereby approved shall be removed from the site, with the land reinstated to its former condition and its agricultural use within 6 months of the Applicant (Mr Tom Ridd) departing the property or discontinuing the residential use of the property in accordance with condition 2, whichever precedes, unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** To reinstate the land to agricultural use promptly and prevent other unlawful residential use of the land.

(4) Prior to occupation, the Perspex used on the hereby approved development, including walls and roof will be removed, and details of the replacement walls and roofs, including materials, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the agreed details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** In the interest of visual amenity, and the character and appearance of the site and wider Exmoor National Park Authority area, in accordance with policies CE-D1 and CE-S6 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011- 2031.

(5) Prior to installation, details of floodlights or other forms of external lighting shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the agreed details.

**Reason:** To protect the amenities of the locality, including the amenities of neighbouring residential properties and to protect the amenities of this rural area and preserve Exmoor National Park's designation as a Dark Sky Reserve in accordance with policies GP1, CE-S1, CE-D1, CE-S6, CE-S2 and CE-S4 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031.

(6) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), there shall be no buildings built for the incidental enjoyment of the dwellinghouse (Class E) without the prior express grant of planning permission.

**Reason:** To protect the character and visual amenity of the area, in accordance with CE-S4 and CE-S6 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031.



6 September 2022

Mr J Holtom returned to the meeting room after the vote

66. **APPLICATION DECISIONS DELEGATED TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE:** The Authority noted the decisions of the Chief Executive determined under delegated powers.
67. **SITE VISITS:** There were no site visits to arrange.

The meeting closed at 1.59 pm

(Chairperson)

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 November 2022

### ALLOCATION OF LEGACY FUNDING

#### Report of the Head of Conservation & Access

**Purpose of the report:** To outline the scope and content of a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a programme focused on the royal forest landscape; to seek the allocation of £300,000 of legacy funding to support the bid.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Authority is recommended to APPROVE the allocation of £300,000 of legacy funding in support of a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

**Authority priority:** Support delivery of the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan – This proposal will ensure that ENPA assets and land are enriched for visitors and the local community.

**Legal and equality implications:** It is considered there will be no adverse impacts on any protected groups.

**Consideration has been given to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and an assessment of the implications of the recommendation(s) of this report is as follows:** There are considered to be no human rights issues in relation to this report.

**Financial and risk implications:** There are no financial and risk implications of the recommendation of this report.

**Climate change response:** There are not considered to be any climate change mitigation implications from this paper.

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## 1. Introduction / Background

1.1 Exmoor National Park Authority was left two substantial legacies in 2021 from the late Elvira Pearson and the late Cynthia Hadley. These have been discussed with Members on several occasions and a paper was brought in May 2022. That paper proposed the allocation of £300,000 from the Cynthia Hadley legacy towards a programme focused on the landscape of the former royal forest around Simonsbath; it was approved by Members. This paper sets out the work that has been done since then to develop this proposal and outlines the next steps.

## 2. The Landscape of the Royal Forest

2.1 The old royal forest of Exmoor forms around 8,000 hectares of farmland and moorland. It is centred on Simonsbath and stretches from Brendon Common in the north to Kinsford Gate in the south; from Challacombe in the west to Pickedstones in the east. After more than a thousand years of ownership, it passed from the Crown to various significant landowners following an Act of Parliament in 1815.

Most of it was then purchased by the Knight family from Worcestershire, thereafter passing to the Fortescue Estate at South Molton in 1897. A substantial proportion was acquired by the Authority in the 1980s with funding from the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

- 2.2 Our Land Visioning exercise for the Authority Estate, which was carried out in 2019/20, identified Authority owned land on the former royal forest as one of the foci for concerted future effort. It also defined a wider priority which was that we should work more effectively with adjoining landowners and neighbours to maximise the impact of what we do.
- 2.3 In 2020 the Nature Recovery Vision for Exmoor identified the former royal forest as a key 'nature recovery hub'.

### **3. Discussions with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Scope of the Bid**

- 3.1 Following several discussions with officers from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Authority was invited to submit an Expression of Interest in June 2022 for the landscape of the royal forest. Towards the end of the summer the Expression of Interest was approved, and we were invited to submit a full funding application.
- 3.2 Through the work outlined in 2.2 and 2.3 above, followed by discussions with ENPA officers and those from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, we have developed a Programme currently arranged into four pillars:

- Capital works around nature recovery and heritage conservation
- Young Rangers, upskilling and volunteering
- Engagement, interpretation, and new audiences
- Staffing and administration of the Programme

- 3.3 The intention is to bring together a small core partnership at the development stage (please see below) to administer the Programme, but that the Authority will be the grant recipient. The philosophy behind our approach is to use external funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to enrich areas of work that we have already identified as priorities – such as nature recovery, working with new audiences and volunteers, mitigating the impacts of climate change, etc - but to do so without drawing on additional time from already hard-pressed Authority officers. This Programme – if funding is secured - will bring substantial additional resources, however we will ensure that funding will be used to ensure that management time from officers is backfilled.

- 3.4 At the heart of the bid is a mission statement which says:

*'We want to lead you into the beautiful moorland of the ancient royal forest of Exmoor to discover its secrets, its natural heritage, and its wildness. To find space to renew, to see nature being nurtured, to witness the beginnings of a new temperate rainforest, to encounter the stories of the people that lived here 100s of years ago, to discover their extraordinary lives and their living legacy in this remote pioneer community.*

*Simonsbath village, at its heart, will give a uniquely warm Exmoor welcome, clearly signposting its rich heritage and leading you into this ineffable place. Other 'gateways' into this landscape, including Pinkery, will provide clear and consistent interpretation, events, and activities for the benefit of new and returning visitors and to give them the confidence to embark on journeys of discovery.*

*You will come away from this place changed by its beauty, renewed by its tranquillity and space, inspired by its stories, and enriched by your experiences there.'*

3.5 We have articulated the problems that we are trying to address as:

- A decline in nature (this area has been designated as one of our 'nature recovery hubs').
- Heritage and the natural environment in poor condition, and a lack of traditional skills to nurture them.
- A tiny, remote, disconnected former estate village which functions now as a 'through-village', without a clear identity.
- A moorland landscape that seems remote and inaccessible but that in reality is rare, accessible, and extraordinary.
- A challenging place for those unfamiliar with it. A place that is overlooked; but a place of unexpected delights, offering immense opportunities for self-discovery and renewal.
- A fragile local economy.
- A lack of a clear identity, combined with poor and obscure interpretation and information.
- An apparent lack of things to do and see.
- A rich and exciting heritage that despite being remarkable and in a beautiful and dramatic setting, is hard to grasp and understand and scattered over a vast moorland landscape.

3.6 Around £300,000 has been identified for each of the four pillars, making a total cost of £1.2 million for the programme (though this might change in detail during further discussions). The Authority's contribution to this Programme would be £300,000 and this will be focused entirely on the capital works pillar of the Programme. In this way, we intend to remain within the spirit of the legacy which is 'to protect and preserve the moor and its wildlife...'. We are also confident that this remains the best way of maximising the impact of the legacy funding, whilst meeting our core objectives; at the same time, we will be able to demonstrate that legacies given to CareMoor will be carefully put to good use and maximum effect.

#### **4. Next Steps**

- 4.1 The bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund will be submitted in the coming weeks with a decision expected before April 2023.
- 4.2 If the bid is successful, a development phase will be carried out during 2023 to bring together the Partnership, prove the concept of some of the elements of the Programme and gather evidence. At the conclusion of the development phase a revised bid will be submitted which, if approved by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, will lead to a delivery phase of between 3 and 5 years.
- 4.3 A further paper will be brought during the development phase, if the bid is successful, and this will lay out the Programme in further detail.

**Rob Wilson North**  
**Head of Conservation and Access**  
**14 October 2022**

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 November 2022

### MEMBERSHIP OF NATIONAL PARKS ENGLAND

#### Report of the Chief Executive

**Purpose of Report:** To update Members with developments at National Parks England and to confirm Exmoor National Park Authority's resignation.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Authority is recommended to CONFIRM its resignation from National Parks England.

**Authority priority:** Achieve Best Value from our resources and improve our performance.

**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).

**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:** Resignation reduces the subscription (£17,000 plus a one-off payment of £5000 to cover 2022/23). Risks associated with leaving NPE are outlined in the report.

**Climate response:** It has been assessed that this report does not have an adverse impact on our ability to respond to climate change.

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## 1. Background

1.1 This paper is to ask Members to confirm Exmoor National Park Authority's resignation from National Parks England.

1.2 In December 2021 Members agreed:

*“ Subject to the absence of National Parks England subscriptions being proportionate to the financial turnover of each National Park Authority, to withdraw funding for National Parks England”*

1.3 Notice was served on National Parks England at the start of the 2022/23 financial year and a fee of £15,000 was paid to cover the 9-month withdrawal period (April - December). The Broads Authority also withdrew its membership.

1.4 Following the withdrawal of the Broads Authority and Exmoor NPA, the NPE Board met in June 2022 to agree future funding options. It also set up a Task Group to develop ideas for future ways of working and funding. The ENPA Chairperson is on this Group.

## **2. NPE Board Discussion on Subscription Level**

- 2.1 In June 2022 David Butterworth (National Park Lead Officer) presented a paper to the NPE Board asking it to determine the most appropriate model for the payment of NPE annual subscriptions from 2023/24 onwards.
- 2.2 The paper set out six options and the Board agreed to a banded formula whereby Exmoor, Northumberland and the New Forest would pay £17k, Dartmoor, the Yorkshire Dales, North York Moors and Lake District would pay £23k and the Peak District and South Downs would pay £29k. (In addition, Exmoor would need to cover the remaining three months of 2022/23 - £5k if it renewed its membership). Most Chairs (Directors) agreed that they could support the banded rates and were keen to keep Exmoor in NPE.
- 2.3 NPE has attempted to provide a fairer subscription model, and this is welcomed. It does not go as far as a direct relationship to the Defra grant, but it is a proportional payment. However, and more significantly, ENPA's financial situation has become markedly worse since these discussions were taking place and a subscription of £17,000 would be even harder to find than it was a year ago.

## **3. NPE Future Working Task Group**

- 3.1 Over the next few years, it is likely that the NPE subscription will need to increase. The Task Group met in September 2022 and recognised that NPE is not financially sustainable; at current funding levels it becomes insolvent in 2025. NPE is using its reserves (approximately £35k per annum) to pay overheads. To continue, NPE requires an annual total subscription of about £220k p/a (plus any inflationary pressures). The banded model set out above would provide £201k in subscriptions.
- 3.2 Options for future direction were discussed:
  - Option 1 Abolition in 2025, leaving subscriptions at current levels until then. Under this scenario NPE anticipates that each NPA will need to build more time and resources into its own budgets/work programmes in order to take on the work of NPE.
  - Option 2 Increasing funding to cover current workloads – setting a three-year budget with each NPA paying more than at present.
  - Option 3 Leaving the subscriptions the same and transferring some of the workload to NPAs.
  - Option 4 A more ambitious programme (£300k - £350k) with additional subscription costs to NPAs.

The four options will be discussed at the Board meeting on 4th November. All options involve increased costs or workload to ENPA staff.

## **4. Discussion**

- 4.1 A reduced subscription of £17k is welcome, as is collaboration between National Park Authorities. There are clearly benefits to working as part of a group of Protected Landscapes and NPE provides a mechanism to do this.
- 4.2 NPE would like Exmoor to remain as a member. Exmoor lobbied to introduce a proportionate subscription model to reflect the size of individual NPAs and the banding approach was agreed to try to keep Exmoor in the “family”.

- 4.3 NPE has helped secure money for work in National Parks, for example, funding to carry out carbon audits, of which £5K went to Exmoor. Of the £1.64m to NPAs for 3-year scheme to implement improvements to Access, £93.2k is going to Exmoor. Of the £75m to Protected Landscapes for 3-year scheme to implement Farming in Protected Landscapes, £1.28m is going to Exmoor in the form of grants to landowners.
- 4.4 NPE enables greater access to Select Committees, Ministers and Senior civil servants through its Chief Executive and lead National Park Officer. We have been advised by NPE that the Government and its Officials are very keen for NPAs to speak with one voice.
- 4.5 NPE is currently working with Defra, the National Association of AONBs and National Trails on the potential for a National Landscapes and Trails Partnership. Exmoor may feel outside of that discussion if not part of the NAAONBs or NPE. Finally, leaving NPE at this time of funding cuts and perceived additional threat to the natural environment, when we need a collective voice seems counterintuitive.
- 4.6 However, given the current financial situation at ENPA, the likelihood that NPE subscriptions will rise in the future, the fact that NPE has not been able to make the case for realistic levels of core funding for NPAs, it is regrettably recommended that ENPA confirms its withdrawal of membership. Should an alternative model emerge, with a smaller secretariat, at a lower cost, potentially hosted in one of the national parks, with more focus on communication, then ENPA could revisit this decision.

**Sarah Bryan**  
**Chief Executive**  
**October 2022**

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 November 2022

### REVISED BUDGET FOR 2022/23

#### Report of the Chief Finance Officer

**Purpose of the report:** To report on the budgetary review that has been carried out at the six month point and to agree the financial strategy for the remainder of the year.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Exmoor National Park Authority is recommended to:

- (1) APPROVE the revised Core Budget for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 1.
- (2) NOTE the position regarding reserves as set out in Appendix 3 and the projected balance on the General Fund at 31 March 2023 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.
- (4) APPROVE the receipt of the Rights of Way Accessibility grant.
- (5) APPROVE the underlying principles which will shape the business review in the short, medium, and long term.

**Authority priority: Achieve** – Getting best value from our resources and improving our performance - Finance and Performance – Financial Management.

**Legal and equality implications:** Local Government Act 2003, Parts 1-3 (Capital Finance, Financial Administration and Grants), Sections 1-39

Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, Part 2 (Financial Management and Internal Control)

The equality and human rights impact of the recommendations of this report have been assessed as having no adverse impact on any particular group or individual.

**Financial and risk implications:** The revised budget is in line with the resources made available to the Authority for 2022/23. Budgeting and financial arrangements are in place to control and ensure spending is kept in line with the revised budget with a General Fund balance available to meet any unforeseen eventuality.

**Climate Change Response:** The report describes projects from within the Authority's Climate Action Plan that are a part of our response to climate change.



## 1. Introduction

1.1 The net budget for 2022/23 was based on the notified National Park Grant (NPG) for the year of £3,211,500. For the third year running this did not contain any inflationary change from the previous year and this is the fourth year when the grant has been at this level. 2022/23 was the first year of a three-year frozen settlement.

1.2 The budget that was formulated and approved for 2022/23 was:

	£
Core Budget	3,028,500
Contributions to Reserves	115,000
Top Sliced Programmes	68,000
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>3,211,500</u></b>

1.3 The Authority's 2022/23 budget was set at the meeting on 1 March 2022. The budget was set before we had received notification from DEFRA around the level of grant. We also did not know what the pay award would be for 2022/23 and we had only just received notification as to the pay award for 2021/22. In addition, inflation had yet to take off and Ukraine had only just been invaded. These factors have changed the basis of financial planning to the Authority (section 6).

1.4 When the budget was set funds were found for Driver Farm, to meet the costs of removing trees impacted by Ash Die-Back and to support the work of the Exmoor Hill Farming Network.

1.5 When the Authority closed the accounts for 2021/22 in July there was a further opportunity to rebalance resources and fund pressures. The Authority used the opportunity to establish the Capital Development Reserve from historic capital receipts and find £30k for the Development Management Reserve.

## 2. Key Themes within the Revised Budget

2.1 The approach when recommending the revised budget is to review the Core Budget, contributions to reserves and top-sliced programmes to ensure that resources can be reallocated between pressures and underspends arising in year.

2.2 The financial consequences of the pandemic have now diminished but instead the key pressure to manage in year has been the probable staff and member pay award. The budget assumed a 2% pay increase but at the time of writing it seems likely that a fixed increase of £1,925 will be agreed. This equates to an average increase of 5.3% and an additional cost of £75k. This is also the opportunity to find further funds to support the work of the Planning Service and the fixed term Conservation Officer (Wildlife).

## 3. Review of the Core Budget

3.1 A detailed review of all the core budget headings has been carried out based on the organisational management arrangements of the Authority. The results of this review are contained in Appendix 1, which compares the revised budget with the original budget for the year.

- 3.2 The original budget for the year is based upon estimated or anticipated income and expenditure. The revised budget is able to adapt for actual in year financial developments. As such it reflects known changes.
- 3.3 The key challenge this year is funding the cost of the probable pay award and other inflationary pressures such as a new electricity tariff. The other key funding pressures are listed in 2.2. These will be managed from within existing budgetary allocations as explained below.
- 3.4 There have been three relevant vacancies in year which have generated savings. One has been filled, one is in the process of being filled and one is deferred pending a decision on the organisational review. There have also been savings on travel costs and NPC income is again robust. However, car parking income is down as visitor numbers have declined. The Pinkery Outdoor Education Centre has not had trading disrupted by the pandemic for the first time in three years.
- 3.5 There are also certain pressures which have arisen in year and have required additional resources. £30k has been transferred to the Development Management service to meet the costs of employing external consultants and £14k to Conservation for the fixed term Conservation Officer (Wildlife). The Legal Services budget is also under financial pressure due to the impact of the long running planning dispute. The Legal Contingency reserve will be heavily used to meet these costs at the end of the year.
- 3.6 The Revised Budget presented does not foresee other significant under or overspends for the remainder of 2022/23. Should these arise at year end, Recommendation 3 provides the mechanism whereby the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Executive use the General Fund and reserves to meet any overspend and receive underspend to **supplement reserves for future spending periods.**

#### **4. Top-Sliced Programmes, Partnerships and Contributions to Reserves**

- 4.1 When the revenue budget for the year was set, the top sliced element ('Programmes') was agreed at £68,000 and £115,000 was added to reserves. Appendix 2 sets out the current position of the Programmes, Partnerships and Contributions to Reserves Budget. Alongside the allocations that were made for the current year, the Authority is also delivering against prior year approvals.
- 4.2 This revised budget does not seek to allocate additional funds for clearing trees affected by Ash Die-Back. Woodlands Officers continue to manage this process within existing allocations. Further allocations may still be needed in future to complete this.
- 4.3 Whilst a number of projects are underway, and a reasonable proportion of the available Programmes budget is committed at the time of writing it is likely that the full budget will not be spent by 31 March 2023. The treatment of underspends will be considered as part of the year end processes.

#### **5. Review of Reserves and Capital Spend**

- 5.1 From a starting point for the year of £3,035,142 and with approvals currently at 3,218,142. Projections for the current and the forthcoming two-year period are shown in Appendix 3.
- 5.2 The only allocation between reserves that Members are being asked to consider as part of this revised budget process is the transfer of the remaining sum on the Simonsbath Project Delivery reserve (£792) to the Ashcombe Gardens reserve.

2022/23 is also the year when the Authority should be able to close down the Dunster Action Plan and funds earmarked for County Gate reserve as funds are transferred and the objectives met.

- 5.3 The Valley of Rocks car park scheme has now been completed and the new ticket machine has been installed at Ashcombe. The Environmental Resilience reserve is funding the roll out of LED lights and the final stage of secondary double glazing at Exmoor House. No capital works have yet been completed at Driver Farm, but surveys have been undertaken, views have been sought and options are being developed.
- 5.4 2022/23 is also the year when the Pinkery Decarbonisation scheme is planned to be completed. At the time of writing, the scheme is experiencing some challenges with project management and delays in accessing contractors. We still hope to complete the scheme this year, but it is possible that it has to reduce in scope.
- 5.5 The Authority has been informed that they are to receive £93k (£42k in 2022/23 and £51k in 2024/25) from DEFRA to improve accessibility. The Access & Recreation Manager is currently developing projects to meet the objectives of the scheme.
- 5.6 Members will observe that reserves will undergo further review and updating as part of the development of the 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Plan and revenue budget. This will be presented to the Authority at the National Park Authority meeting in March.
- 5.7 The projected balance of approximately £300,000 on the General Fund Reserve is consistent with the Medium-Term Financial Plan. This is the balance held to meet any unforeseen or exceptional items of expenditure and to provide working capital and is the equivalent of one month's operating costs.

## **6. Financial Outlook and Capability**

- 6.1 The setting of the revised budget also provides the opportunity to reflect on the Authority's longer-term financial position and deliver savings or adjust priorities if the need or desire is there.
- 6.2 The Authority has for a number of years been experiencing declining funding or grants that have not kept pace with inflation. The Authority's response to this so far has been to seek to maintain service levels while achieving efficiencies and increasing alternative sources of income. Events since the 2022/23 budget was set (see 1.3) means that this strategy is no longer sustainable.
- 6.3 When the 2022/23 budget was set the Authority had small but achievable savings targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25. Now that inflation has increased and we have received notification of an additional two years of freeze to the National Park Grant, savings targets have increased to approximately £300k in 2023/24 with further, large increases in the years after.
- 6.4 This has necessitated an alternative approach to the prioritisation and budgeting of ENPA services in the short term. A process has commenced to determine which services will be withdrawn or reduced and which will be continued. This process will provide a body of evidence to support service prioritisation and the development of a more focussed and outward looking National Park Authority, better suited to the needs of Exmoor and the nation.
- 6.5 This has and will involve a series of public steps. Intended steps are shown below:

- The July Authority produced an updated Medium Term Financial Forecast.
- The Annual Review of Risk Management was presented at the September Authority. This highlighted the scale of the challenge and stated that this will be a major test of the leadership and governance of the Authority.
- The December Authority will receive a report recommending certain changes to charges that we set.
- Specific options to address the financial challenge will be discussed at the February Authority meeting.
- The 2023/24 budget will be set in March.

6.6 The task of this paper in support of service prioritisation is to establish the principles that will be guiding the process. The National Park Authority exists to deliver national park purposes to further the purposes of designation. Beyond this, staff require further direction to shape this next period. In discussion with Members, the following principles and themes can guide the Leadership Team over these next key months.

Key principles:

1. Focus. A renewed focus on Conservation and Engagement.
2. Simplicity. A smaller, simpler organisation that excels at the core tasks.
3. Responsibility. Not taking charge of tasks that other bodies are responsible for or that are not central to our role.

Supporting themes

1. A staff team with the capacity and expertise to seek out external funds and deliver projects.
2. Staff capacity. Ensuring that the Authority has the capacity to safely, legally, and sustainably deliver the services that are retained.
3. Making better use of the assets we retain. All assets that we own should be valued and applied productively.
4. Carbon reduction. To use this process as an opportunity to take a leap in the reduction of our associated release of fossil fuels.
5. More commercially focussed.

6.7 The Authority has a great deal to be positive about, but it is vital that we make these steps so that we can continue to be a viable organisation that is ambitious and excited for the future.

**Gordon Bryant**  
**Chief Finance Officer**  
**October 2022**

Section	Budget Heading	2022/23 Original Budget £	2022/23 Revised Expenditure £	2022/23 Revised Income £	2022/23 Revised Budget £	Variance between 22/23 Revised and 22/23 Original	Notes
Support to Land Managers	Access & Recreation	130,200	139,000	-27,500	111,500	-18,700	staff vacancy in year
	Archaeology & Historic Environment	81,900	83,700	-1,200	82,500	600	
	Field Services	298,900	330,000	-23,000	307,000	8,100	
	Conservation Advice & Support	302,100	325,400	-4,000	321,400	19,300	to fund FT conservation officer
	Rangers	107,200	126,500	-18,000	108,500	1,300	
<b>Support to Land Managers Total</b>		<b>920,300</b>	<b>1,004,600</b>	<b>-73,700</b>	<b>930,900</b>	<b>10,600</b>	
Support services to the Community	Development Management	308,100	433,500	-95,000	338,500	30,400	to fund external consultants
	Rural Enterprise	105,600	112,400	0	112,400	6,800	
<b>Support services to the Community Total</b>		<b>413,700</b>	<b>545,900</b>	<b>-95,000</b>	<b>450,900</b>	<b>37,200</b>	
Support to National Park Users	Education & Volunteers	95,500	99,600	-2,000	97,600	2,100	
	National Park & Information Centres	155,200	319,800	-164,500	155,300	100	
	Information & Interpretation Management	166,900	146,600	0	146,600	-20,300	staff vacancy in year
	Pinkery	0	140,000	-140,000	0	0	
	Visitor Facilities	9,400	84,900	-75,000	9,900	500	
<b>Support to National Park Users Total</b>		<b>427,000</b>	<b>790,900</b>	<b>-381,500</b>	<b>409,400</b>	<b>-17,600</b>	
Corporate & Customer Support	Legal Support	70,000	70,000	0	70,000	0	
	Strategy & Performance	331,900	331,800	0	331,800	-100	
Finance and ICT Services	Finance and ICT Services	411,800	420,300	-18,700	401,600	-10,200	
Land and Property Services	Land and Property Services	21,400	271,100	-255,000	16,100	-5,300	
<b>Support Services Total</b>		<b>835,100</b>	<b>1,093,200</b>	<b>-273,700</b>	<b>819,500</b>	<b>-15,600</b>	
Corporate Management	Corporate Management	150,500	145,000	0	145,000	-5,500	
	Historic Pensions Contributions	150,000	150,000	0	150,000	0	
	Corporate Subscriptions	33,400	33,400	0	33,400	0	
	Members	98,500	89,400	0	89,400	-9,100	reduction in travel costs
<b>Corporate Management Total</b>		<b>432,400</b>	<b>417,800</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>417,800</b>	<b>-14,600</b>	
<b>Total Core Budget</b>		<b>3,028,500</b>	<b>3,852,400</b>	<b>-823,900</b>	<b>3,028,500</b>	<b>0</b>	

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMMES, PARTNERSHIPS  
AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESERVES**

**2022/23**

ORIGINAL BUDGET	<b>183,000</b>
 <b>LESS: Contributions to Reserves</b>	
Woodlands - ADB	30,000
Corporate Equipment & Vehicle Replacement	50,000
Estates Reserve - Driver Farm	25,000
Internship and Trainee Fund	10,000
	<b>115,000</b>
 <b>LESS: Top sliced Programmes</b>	
Tourism	15,000
Hill Farm Network	19,000
Potential Pinkery overspend	20,000
Website Development	5,000
SERC/DBRC Bio-records	5,000
STEAM	4,000
	<b>68,000</b>
 <b>2022/23 Programmes &amp; Partnership Fund</b>	<b>183,000</b>

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
ANALYSIS OF RESERVES**

	Balance 31/03/22	2022/23 Budget Allocations	2022/23 In year Budget Transfers	Current Balance	Transfers (from) Reserves 2022/23	Transfers (from) Reserves 2023/24	Transfers (from) Reserves 2024/25	Projected Balance 31/03/25
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>REVENUE EARMARKED RESERVES</b>								
<b>Support to Land Managers</b>								
Ashcombe Garden Restoration	3,942		728	4,670				4,670
Mire - Archaeology	29,758			29,758	-29,758			(0)
Heritage Projects	25,297			25,297	-10,000			15,297
Deer Monitoring Study	13,424			13,424				13,424
Woodland Mgt Reserve	716	30,000		30,716	-30,000			716
Ennis	13,528			13,528	-13,528			0
Rights of Way	206,663			206,663	-30,000	-50,000		126,663
Simonsbath Project Delivery	728		-728	(0)				(0)
<b>Support to National Park Users</b>								
Caremoor For Exmoor	460,084			460,084				460,084
National Park Centres spend to save	105,336			105,336	-40,000			65,336
Get Involved Programme	1,349			1,349	-1,349			0
Health & Well-being	7,003			7,003	-7,003			0
Engagement & Outreach	23,968			23,968	-12,000	-11,968		0
<b>Support to the Community and Business</b>								
Development of Planning Service	50,559			50,559	-35,000			15,559
Conserv Area Appraisals & Neighbourhd Plan	12,283			12,283				12,283
Dunster Action Plan	20,891			20,891	-20,891			0
Rural Enterprise	63,218			63,218	-18,000			45,218
<b>Strategy &amp; Performance</b>								
Environmental Resilience	65,081			65,081	-40,000	-25,000		81
IT and Web Development	56,975			56,975	-20,000	-25,000		11,975
Corporate Equipment & Vehicle Replacement	163,125	50,000		213,125	-50,000	-50,000	-50,000	63,125
Planning Policy	103,356			103,356	-15,000			88,356
Research & Development	21,901			21,901				21,901
Modernisation	99,306			99,306		-99,306		0
Internship and Trainee Fund	46,993	10,000		56,993	-29,000	-27,993		0
Capital Development Reserve	100,000			100,000				100,000
Authority Estate	282,034	25,000		307,034	-50,000	-100,000	-50,000	107,034
	1,977,518	115,000	0	2,092,518	-451,529	-389,267	-100,000	1,151,722
<b>PROGRAMMES &amp; PARTNERSHIPS</b>								
Programmes - fixed term	200,286	68,000		268,286	-60,000			208,286
Partnership Fund/ small grants scheme	34,821	25,000		59,821	-2,000			57,821
Programmes & Partnership Earmarked - County Gate	30,000			30,000	-30,000			0
	265,108	93,000	0	358,108	-92,000	0	0	266,108
<b>GENERAL FUND AND CONTINGENCIES</b>								
General Fund	317,551			317,551				317,551
Contingency Fund - General (pf uncommit)	374,966	-25,000		349,966		-100,000		249,966
Contingency Fund - Legal	100,000			100,000	-100,000			0
	792,516	-25,000	0	767,516	-100,000	-100,000	0	567,516
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<b>3,035,142</b>	<b>183,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,218,142</b>	<b>-643,529</b>	<b>-489,267</b>	<b>-100,000</b>	<b>1,985,346</b>

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 November 2022

### TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REPORT

#### Report of the Chief Finance Officer

**Purpose of Report:** To report to Members on Treasury Management Performance for the first six months of the 2022-23 financial year.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Exmoor National Park Authority is recommended to NOTE the Treasury Management Outturn for the first six months of the 2022-23 financial year.

**Business Plan reference:** Achieve by providing core services; getting best value from our resources and improving our performance.

**Legal and equality implications:** Local Government Act 2003, Parts 1-3 (Capital Finance, Financial Administration and Grants), Sections 1-39

Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, Part 2 (Financial Management and Internal Control)

The equality and human rights impact of the recommendations of this report have been assessed as having no adverse impact on any particular group or individual.

Background Papers: -

- The Local Government Act 2003 (LGA 2003)
- The CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-
- Sectoral Guidance Notes Revised Edition 2021 (CIPFA TM Code).
- The CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities: Revised Edition 2021 (CIPFA Prudential Code).

**Financial and Risk Implications:** The implications are identified throughout the report.

**Climate Change Response:** It has been assessed that this report does not have an adverse impact on our ability to respond to climate change.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Treasury Management Strategy for 2022-23 is underpinned by the adoption of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (Revised 2021), which includes the requirement for determining a treasury strategy on the likely financing and investment activity for the forthcoming financial year. The Code also recommends that the Authority is informed of Treasury Management activities at least twice a year.



- 1.2 CIPFA published new versions of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (Prudential Code) and the Treasury Management Code of Practice. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities (DLUHC) also published revised Investment Guidance which came into effect from April 2018. This report gives a summarised account of Treasury Management activity and outturn for the first half of the year, and ensures the Authority is embracing best practice in accordance with CIPFA recommendations.
- 1.3 During the reporting period, Somerset County Council (SCC) has managed Treasury Management activities under an agreed Service Level Agreement. Investments were made on the basis of aggregating funds in order to maximise the benefits for both bodies (including using SCC's "Comfund"). Accounting arrangements were in place to divide the interest gained (and charged) between the Authorities.
- 1.4 The Authority delegates responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices, and the execution of administration of treasury management decisions, to me as Chief Finance Officer.

## 2. Investment Activity

- 2.1 A total of £16,438 has been earned in Comfund gross interest in the first six months of the year on an average balance of £2.829m (£3,984 on £2.997m for the same period 2021-22). Comfund administration charges were £329, giving net income of £16,109 for the period.
- 2.2 The average revenue balance has been far less when compared to the same period last year, at £75k, from £287k the previous year. This is due to investments being made in the Comfund in the belief that grant would be paid in a timely manner. Grants have not been paid in a timely manner and the revenue balance has spent time in an overdrawn position. The average Comfund investment decreased too, by £166k from £2.997m for the same period 2021-22 to £2.829m this year. The benefit of using Comfund over revenue has been £3,019 for the year-to-date.
- 2.3 The combined return of Comfund and Revenue has been 1.16% on an average balance of £2.90m. When compared to the market, this was 0.03% lower than the overnight SONIA rate (a benchmark rate at which Banks will lend to each other), and 0.11% below average base rate. A below benchmark return is practically inevitable in a rapidly rising interest rate environment. The table below highlights these figures: -

	<b>Balance on 31/03/2022 £000</b>	<b>Rate as at 31/03 %</b>	<b>Balance on 30/09/2022 £000</b>	<b>Rate as at 30/09 %</b>	<b>Average Balance for period £000</b>	<b>Average Rate for period %</b>
Revenue Balances	24	0.375	-94	1.875	75	0.665
Comfund Balances	2,900	0.67	2,800	1.79	2,829	1.17
<b>Total Balances</b>	<b>2,924</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>2,706</b>	<b>1.79</b>	<b>2,904</b>	<b>1.16</b>

- 2.4 The Guidance on Local Government Investments in England gives priority to security and liquidity and the Authority's aim is to achieve a yield commensurate with these principles.

- 2.5 As mentioned in 1.3, SCC has managed Treasury Management activities under an agreed Service Level Agreement. Investments were made on the basis of aggregating funds in order to maximise the benefits for both bodies (including using SCC's "Comfund"). The current arrangement strategy of lending all surplus funds to SCC represents an investment that is virtually free from risk of counterparty default, as SCC is the only counterparty.
- 2.6 Security of capital remained SCC's main investment objective. Current SCC approved deposit counterparties are listed below. Those used during the first half of the year are denoted with a star.

<b>Bank or Building Society</b>		<b>Bank or Building Society</b>	
Australia & NZ Bank	*	Santander UK	*
Bank of Scotland		Standard Chartered Bank	*
Bank of Montreal	*	Handelsbanken Plc	*
Bank of Nova Scotia		Toronto-Dominion Bank	*
Barclays Bank Plc		United Overseas Bank	
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce			
Close Brothers Ltd		<b>Sterling CNAV Money Market Funds</b>	
Commonwealth Bank of Australia		Deutsche MMF	*
DBS Bank Ltd	*	Invesco Aim MMF	*
DZ Bank	*	Federated Prime MMF	*
Goldman Sachs International Bank		Insight MMF	*
HSBC Bank	*	Aberdeen Standard MMF	*
Landesbank Hessen-Thuringen	*	LGIM MMF	*
Lloyds Bank	*	SSGA MMF	*
National Australia Bank		Aviva MMF	*
National Bank of Canada	*		
National Westminster	*		
Nationwide BS	*	<b>Other Counterparties</b>	
Nordea Bank	*	Other Local Authorities (Number of Deals)	* (23)
OP Corporate Bank		Debt Management Office	
Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation			
Rabobank			
Royal Bank of Scotland			

- 2.7 During the period SCC has continuously monitored counterparties, and all ratings of proposed counterparties have been subject to verification on the day, immediately prior to investment. Other indicators taken into account have been:
- Credit Default Swaps and Government Bond Spreads.
  - GDP and Net Debt as a Percentage of GDP for sovereign countries.
  - Likelihood and strength of Parental Support.
  - Banking resolution mechanisms for the restructure of failing financial institutions i.e. bail-in.
  - Share Price.
  - Market information on corporate developments and market sentiment towards the counterparties and sovereigns.
- 2.8 **Counterparty Update.** In July Fitch revised the outlook on Standard Chartered from negative to stable as it expected profitability to improve thanks to the higher interest rate environment.
- 2.9 In September Fitch revised the outlook on HSBC Bank from negative to stable as it expected profitability to improve thanks to the higher interest rate environment.
- 2.10 Having completed a full review of its credit advice on unsecured deposits at UK and non-UK banks, in May SCC advisor's Arlingclose, extended the maximum duration limit for five UK banks, four Canadian banks and four German banks to six months. The maximum duration for unsecured deposits with other UK and non-UK banks on Arlingclose's recommended list is 100 days. These recommendations were unchanged at the end of the period.
- 2.11 As a result of the UK Government's 'fiscal event' at the end of September, both S&P and Fitch changed the outlook for the UK from Stable to Negative, on the 30th September and 5th October, respectively.

### **3. The Economic Background**

- 3.1 The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has continued to put pressure on global inflation and the economic outlook for UK and world growth remains weak. The UK political situation towards the end of the period following the 'fiscal event' increased uncertainty further.
- 3.2 UK inflation remained extremely high. Annual headline CPI hit 10.1% in July, the highest rate for 40 years, before falling modestly to 9.9% in August. The energy price cap was increased by 54% in April, while a further increase in the cap was expected in October. Central Bank rhetoric and action remained robust. The Bank of England, Federal Reserve, and the European Central Bank all pushed up interest rates over the period and committed to fighting inflation, even when the consequences were, in all likelihood, recessions in those regions.
- 3.3 The Bank of England increased the official Bank Rate to 2.25% over the period. From 0.75% in March, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) pushed through rises of 0.25% in each of the following two MPC meetings, before hiking by 0.50% in August and again in September. The September vote was 5-4, with five votes for a 0.5% increase, three for a 0.75% increase and one for an 0.25% increase. The Committee noted that domestic inflationary pressures are expected to remain strong and so given ongoing strong rhetoric around tackling inflation, further Bank Rate rises should be expected.

- 3.4 The labour market remained tight through the period but there was some evidence of easing demand and falling supply. The 3-month unemployment rate for April fell to 3.8% and declined further to 3.6% in July. Pay growth in July was 5.5% for total pay (including bonuses) and 5.2% for regular pay. Once adjusted for inflation, however, growth in total pay was -2.6% and -2.8% for regular pay. With disposable income squeezed and higher energy bills still to come, consumer confidence fell to a record low of -44 in August, down -41 in the previous month. Quarterly GDP fell -0.1% in the April-June quarter driven by a decline in services output.
- 3.5 On 23rd September the UK government, following a change of leadership, announced a raft of measures in a 'mini budget', loosening fiscal policy with a view to boosting the UK's trend growth rate to 2.5%. With little detail on how government borrowing would be returned to a sustainable path, financial markets reacted negatively. Gilt yields rose dramatically by between 0.7% and 1% for all maturities with the rise most pronounced for shorter dated gilts.
- 3.6 Bank of England policymakers noted that any resulting inflationary impact of increased demand created by the Government stimulus, would be met with monetary tightening, raising the prospect of much higher Bank Rate and consequential negative impacts on the housing market.
- 3.7 Over the period the 5-year UK benchmark gilt yield rose from 1.41% to 4.40%, the 10-year gilt yield rose from 1.61% to 4.15%, the 20-year yield from 1.82% to 4.13% and the 50-year yield from 1.56% to 3.25%. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 1.20% over the period.
- 3.8 Sterling Overnight Interbank Average (SONIA) money market rates moved up during the period, anticipating gradual base rate rises. As it became clear base rate would need to rise further and faster to combat inflation, rates rose rapidly from the last week in August. The 12-month figure moved from 3.20% on the 24th August, to 5.15% on the 28th September. The 1-month, 3-month, 6-month, and 12-month SONIA rates averaged 1.38%, 1.78%, 2.21%, and 2.66% respectively over the period, and ended the period at 2.33%, 3.89%, 4.10%, and 4.95% respectively. A long way from the negative rates seen only the year before.
- 3.9 Lending rates between Local Authorities have remained suppressed, as supply has generally outstripped demand. The effect that economic conditions had on money market rates during the period, can be seen in Table 1, Appendix A.

#### **4. Debt Management**

- 4.1 The Authority is currently debt free. Any potential borrowing is driven by the capital plan. There are no plans that would necessitate borrowing during the remainder of 2022-23 or in the foreseeable future.

#### **5. Compliance with Prudential Indicators**

- 5.1 The Authority has no borrowing, and all lending remains at a maximum of one month duration, therefore all Prudential Indicators remain at zero. For completeness of reporting, and in line with the CIPFA code, the Authority can confirm that it has complied with its Prudential Indicators for 2022-23. Those agreed by Full Authority and actual figures as at 30<sup>th</sup> September are included below: -

	2022-23 £thousand	As at 30-09-22 £thousand
Authorised limit (borrowing only)	100	0
Operational boundary (borrowing only)	100	0

#### Maturity structure of borrowing

	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	As at 30-09-22
Under 12 months	100%	0%	0%
>12 months and within 24 months	0%	0%	0%
>24 months and within 5 years	0%	0%	0%
>5 years and within 10 years	0%	0%	0%
>10 years	0%	0%	0%

	2022-23 £thousand	As at 30-09-22 £thousand
Prudential Limit for principal sums invested for periods longer than 365 days	0	0

#### Credit Risk Indicator

SCC has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating / credit score of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk (in conjunction with Arlingclose) and will be calculated quarterly.

Credit risk indicator (to be below target)	Target	Actual
Portfolio average credit rating (score)	A (6)	AA-(4.43)

CIPFA no longer recommends setting upper limits on fixed and variable rate exposures, so these are no longer calculated for this paper.

## 6. Outlook for Quarters 3 & 4

- 6.1 Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to rise further during 2022-23 to reach 5% by the end of the financial year. The MPC is particularly concerned about the demand implications of fiscal loosening, the tight labour market, sterling weakness and the willingness of firms to raise prices and wages. The MPC may therefore raise Bank Rate more quickly and to a higher level to dampen aggregate demand and reduce the risk of sustained higher inflation. Arlingclose now expects Bank Rate to peak at 5.0%, with 200bps of increases this calendar year. This action by the MPC will slow the economy, necessitating cuts in Bank Rate later in 2024.
- 6.2 Gilt yields will face further upward pressure in the short term due to lower confidence in UK fiscal policy, higher inflation expectations and asset sales by the BoE. Given the recent sharp rises in gilt yields, the risks are now broadly balanced to either side. Over the longer term, gilt yields are forecast to fall slightly over the forecast period.

- 6.3 Uncertainty on the path of interest rates has increased dramatically due to the possible risk from unknowns which could include for instance another Conservative leadership contest, a general election, or further tax changes including implementing windfall taxes. The government's blank cheque approach to energy price caps, combined with international energy markets priced in dollars, presents a fiscal mismatch that has contributed to significant decline in sterling and sharp rises in gilt yields which will feed through to consumers' loans and mortgages and business funding costs.
- 6.4 The UK economy already appears to be in recession, with business activity and household spending falling. The short- to medium-term outlook for the UK economy is relatively bleak. The housing market impact of increases in the Base Rate could act as a "circuit breaker" which stops rates rising much beyond 5.0%, but this remains an uncertainty.

A table of forecast rates to September 2025 is shown below: -

	Dec 22	Mar 23	Jun 23	Sep 23	Dec 23	Mar 24
Upside Risk	0.50	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00
Base Rate	4.25	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	0.50
Downside Risk	-1.00	-1.00	-0.75	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50

	Jun 24	Sep 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jun 25	Sept 25
Upside Risk	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Base Rate	5.00	5.00	4.75	4.25	3.75	3.25
Downside Risk	-0.75	-1.25	-1.50	-1.75	-1.75	-1.75

## 7. Summary

- 7.1 In compliance with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice this report provides members with a summary report of the treasury management activity during the first six months of 2022-23. As indicated in this report none of the Prudential Indicators have been breached and a prudent approach has been taken in relation to investment activity with priority being given to security and liquidity over yield.

**Gordon Bryant**  
**Chief Finance Officer**  
**October 2022**



## Appendix A

### Money Market Data and PWLB Rates

The average low and high rates correspond to the rates during the financial year-to-date, rather than those in the tables below.

Table 1: Bank Rate, Money Market Rates -SONIA (Sterling Overnight Interbank Rates)

Date	Bank Rate	O/N SONIA	7-day SONIA	1-month SONIA	3-month SONIA	6-month SONIA	12-month SONIA
01/04/2022	0.75	0.65	0.67	0.60	1.10	1.33	1.57
30/04/2022	0.75	0.68	0.85	0.94	1.25	1.40	1.80
31/05/2022	1.00	0.90	0.92	1.02	1.42	1.71	1.95
30/06/2022	1.25	1.07	1.23	1.24	1.60	2.20	2.70
31/07/2022	1.25	1.20	1.22	1.49	1.90	2.40	2.88
31/08/2022	1.75	1.57	1.70	1.89	2.30	2.95	3.60
30/09/2022	2.25	2.15	2.22	2.32	3.99	4.10	4.95
<b>Average</b>	<b>1.28</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>1.28</b>	<b>1.38</b>	<b>1.78</b>	<b>2.21</b>	<b>2.66</b>
<b>Minimum</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>1.57</b>
<b>Maximum</b>	<b>2.25</b>	<b>2.17</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>2.86</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>4.76</b>	<b>5.15</b>
<b>Spread</b>	<b>1.50</b>	<b>1.60</b>	<b>1.83</b>	<b>2.26</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>3.59</b>	<b>3.58</b>



Table 2: PWLB Borrowing Rates – Fixed Rate, Equal Instalment of Principal (EIP) Loans

Change Date	Notice No	4½-5 yrs	9½-10 yrs	19½-20 yrs	29½-30 yrs	39½-40 yrs	49½-50 yrs
01/04/2022	127/22	2.43	2.52	2.70	2.86	2.90	2.87
30/04/2022	164/22	2.58	2.68	2.88	3.05	3.09	3.05
31/05/2022	206/22	2.55	2.67	3.03	3.28	3.34	3.32
30/06/2022	246/22	3.00	3.06	3.40	3.68	3.76	3.73
31/07/2022	288/22	2.73	2.69	3.02	3.42	3.58	3.58
31/08/2022	331/22	3.83	3.73	3.81	4.08	4.16	4.11
30/09/2022	374/22	5.25	5.30	5.15	5.14	5.09	4.96
	<b>Low</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>2.39</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>2.72</b>	<b>2.75</b>	<b>2.72</b>
	<b>High</b>	<b>5.60</b>	<b>5.63</b>	<b>5.56</b>	<b>5.76</b>	<b>5.94</b>	<b>6.00</b>
	<b>Average</b>	<b>3.10</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>3.35</b>	<b>3.59</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>3.64</b>
	<b>Spread</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>2.99</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>3.28</b>

Table 3: PWLB Borrowing Rates – Fixed Rate, Maturity Loans

Change Date	Notice No	4½-5 yrs	9½-10 yrs	19½-20 yrs	29½-30 yrs	39½-40 yrs	49½-50 yrs
01/04/2022	127/22	2.52	2.69	2.90	2.82	2.70	2.62
30/04/2022	164/22	2.67	2.87	3.09	2.99	2.84	2.75
31/05/2022	206/22	2.66	3.01	3.34	3.27	3.16	3.07
30/06/2022	246/22	3.06	3.38	3.76	3.68	3.55	3.47
31/07/2022	288/22	2.69	3.00	3.58	3.53	3.42	3.37
31/08/2022	331/22	3.82	3.88	4.23	4.10	3.94	3.87
30/09/2022	374/22	5.29	5.15	5.12	4.88	4.61	4.43
	<b>Low</b>	<b>2.38</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>2.75</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>2.52</b>	<b>2.44</b>
	<b>High</b>	<b>5.64</b>	<b>5.55</b>	<b>5.94</b>	<b>5.97</b>	<b>5.83</b>	<b>5.70</b>
	<b>Average</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>3.37</b>
	<b>Spread</b>	<b>3.26</b>	<b>2.99</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>3.26</b>

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 November 2022

### UK NATIONAL PARKS' CONFERENCE, EXMOOR 2022

#### Report of the Chief Executive

**Purpose of Report:** To provide Members with feedback on the UK National Parks' Conference hosted by Exmoor NPA, 27 to 29 September 2022.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Authority is recommended to NOTE this report

**Authority priority:** Hosting the conference is a specified action in the 2022/23 Corporate Plan.

**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). Landscapes for All was one of the 4 key challenges for National Parks considered in the conference.

**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:** The financial and risk implications were identified and under constant review through the planning and execution of the conference. Members will note in section 4.3 that no additional financial input from the Authority has been required.

**Climate response:** A pro-active approach was taken to minimising and mitigating climate impacts of the conference including seeking to eliminate use of single use plastics in all elements, using local produce, goods and services throughout, and enabling and facilitating sustainable travel options for delegates. For unavoidable emissions a tree per delegate will be dedicated in the Authority's woodland creation project at Bye Wood, through the CareMoor for Exmoor scheme. Climate change was one of the 4 key challenges for National Parks considered in the conference.

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## 1. Background

- 1.1. Members will be aware the UK National Parks' Conference is usually held every two years and is hosted on a rota basis by each of the UK National Park Authorities, with Exmoor hosting it this year from the 27 to 29 September.

- 1.2. A core staff team led by the Rural Enterprise Manager with the Sustainable Economy Officer (Katrina Munro) and Corporate Support Officer (Judy Coles) took on event planning and management, with the active involvement of the CEO and Head of Strategy and Performance. A Member working group consisting of Robin Milton (Chair), Evelyn Stacey and Frances Nicholson provided input at an early stage to set the theme, direction and approach taken to the conference.
- 1.3. Hosting the conference was a significant undertaking, especially for a small Authority such as Exmoor. Key challenges included:
  - The impact of Covid-19, leading to us deferring the planned conference from 2021 to 2022 and having to work to minimise and mitigate the impact of Covid on delegates and the event programme.
  - No single venue within the National Park with capacity to host the event.
  - A small staff team, already stretched in their day jobs, with no resource to bolster capacity.
  - No dedicated budget to offset against financial risks.
  - Issues around increasing costs for food and transport and some supplier shortages in the same areas.
  - In the run up to the conference the calling of train strikes (subsequently postponed), the passing of Her Majesty the Queen and high-profile public debate about future environmental policies created further challenges.
- 1.4. Despite the challenges, hosting also offered an opportunity to showcase Exmoor and the work of the Authority and partners, support our rural economy and play an active role in supporting UK national working.
- 1.5. At an early stage it was agreed to do something a little different to previous conferences. The format differed from previous years in the following ways:
  - The conference was based in and around Dunster with plenary sessions held at the Tithe Barn, with delegates arranging their own Bed and Breakfast accommodation, thus supporting local accommodation businesses.
  - The event was realigned with a stronger focus on it being an internal workshop, as opposed to an outward facing profile raising event (which National Parks Partnerships may be better placed to deliver as a one-day event in a central location in the future).
  - An informal evening at a local farm (Horner) as opposed to the traditional conference dinner, again providing the opportunity to support a range of local businesses and showcase some great Exmoor local food and drink.
  - We sought to introduce more time for informal networking and discussion amongst delegates (limited venue capacity hampered this a little).
  - Reduced costs to delegates and the host Authority.

## 2. Theme, programme and outcomes

- 2.1 The conference theme, '***What does the nation need from National Parks today?***' provided an opportunity to reconsider the role of National Parks in response to current global challenges including the impact of Covid-19, the growing climate and nature crises, and cost of living challenges.

2.2 Speakers, primarily drawn from outside of the National Park ‘family’, were invited to give their views on the conference theme, focusing on 4 key challenges:

- Nature recovery
- Climate change
- Landscapes for all
- Green economic recovery

2.3 In addition to plenary sessions a day of study tours provided delegates with the opportunity to meet a wide range of local communities, businesses, and partner organisations within Exmoor to share best practice and consider together the conference theme.

	<b>PLACES / THEMES COVERED</b>	<b>EXTERNAL CONTRIBUTORS IN ADDITION TO ENPA</b>
<b>1. Managing Change</b>	Holnicote Estate, Porlock Marsh, Porlock Weir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Trust (Riverlands)</li> <li>• Porlock Vision</li> <li>• Porlock Manor Estate</li> <li>• Porlock Oysters</li> </ul>
<b>2. Exmoor’s Hidden Coast</b>	E-bike adventure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exmoor Adventures</li> <li>• National Trust (Coast project)</li> </ul>
<b>3. Transformations – stories from the heart of Exmoor</b>	White Rock, Ashcombe Gardens, Sawmill, Pinkery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three Atop</li> <li>• Exmoor Young Rangers</li> <li>• Wicked Wolf Gin</li> <li>• Moor Wild Experiences</li> </ul>
<b>4. Chain Reaction</b>	Prayway Head, Two Moors Way, Hoarok Valley, Kispcombe Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mires / South West Water</li> <li>• National Trust</li> </ul>
<b>5. Signs, Stars and Saplings</b>	FST depot, Tree Nursery Exford Dark Skies Hub, Bye Wood / CareMoor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wild About Exmoor / Exford Bridge Tea Rooms</li> </ul>
<b>6. Living Landscapes</b>	Webbers Post / Dunkery Beacon, Rural Housing, Farming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Trust</li> <li>• Exmoor Young Voices</li> <li>• Exmoor Rural Housing Network</li> <li>• Exmoor Farmers Ltd</li> <li>• Exmoor Hill Farming Network</li> </ul>
<b>7. People, Place and Prosperity</b>	Rural Enterprise, Sustainable Tourism, Valley of Rocks, landscape management and Parracombe community initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit Exmoor</li> <li>• Visit Lynton &amp; Lynmouth</li> <li>• Plastic Free Exmoor</li> <li>• Cliff Railway</li> <li>• Parracombe Community Trust</li> </ul>
<b>8. Managing Honey pots, Ponies and Moorland</b>	Tarr Steps visitor management, ENNIS project, Exmoor Pony Centre, Graze the Moor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moorland Mousie Trust</li> <li>• Molland Estate</li> </ul>
<b>9. Innovation on Exmoor</b>	Rural Enterprise, Singer instruments, Wood Advent Farm, North Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Singer Instruments,</li> <li>• Oxygen Conservation / Wood Advent Farm</li> <li>• South West Coast Path</li> </ul>

2.4 A panel session on the final day gave an opportunity to reflect on what had been heard, seen, discovered and experienced and to consider collectively about the vital role National Parks should play in supporting the health and wellbeing of the nation today in the 21st century.

2.5 We set out the following objectives for the conference:

- Time away from the pressure of the day job to think collaboratively with colleagues from other NPAs on big agenda issues.
- Create an opportunity for staff and Members to meet, learn, share ideas, be inspired.
- Provide time and space for social networking and informal peer to peer learning.
- Take away key messages for NPA's and supporting bodies to consider in relation to NPs in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

2.6 An overview report is attached as Appendix 1 detailing outcomes from the conference. The report is available on the conference webpage at [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/conf22](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/conf22). The webpage also contains links to the full conference programme/guide (including speaker profiles), and audio recordings of the main plenary sessions. A film commissioned, including views from speakers and delegates, will be hosted on the page once available.

2.7 Whilst we did not pro-actively seek to engage the press in the conference, we picked up local press and radio coverage. In addition, the Times countryside correspondent and the BBC Politics show attended the last day, and the conference even had a mention on Steve Wrights BBC Radio Two afternoon show.

### **3. Feedback and evaluation**

3.1 Feedback was invited via an online evaluation form circulated at the end of the conference. To date there have been 50 responses.

3.2 In addition to these several letters and emails have been received from other National Parks and partners congratulating the Authority on the conference and offering thanks to those involved.

3.3 Respondents were asked to rank how likely they would recommend attending a future such event to colleagues on a scale of 0-10 to give a net promoter score which came in at 72 (on a range of -100 to +100, with anything over 50 considered 'good' and over 70 as 'world-class').

#### **Organisation**

3.4 96% of respondents rated the organisation as very good, with 4% rating it good, reflecting well on the collective effort of staff and Members involved in all aspects of the preparation and running of the conference. Specific comments given included:

- *Perfectly organised, credit to Exmoor NPA.*
- *The team did an excellent job - as a retired university professor I have been to a lot of conferences and this was by far the best in terms of interest, relevance and fun! thank you for all your hard work.*
- *Excellent - Exmoor was sold incredibly well to all attendee's*

- *The organisation of the logistics was probably the best of the 4 conferences I have attended now, and the welcome and help from officers and volunteers second to none.*
- *I thought the conference was really well organized and thoroughly enjoyed it.*
- *I was tremendously impressed by the organisation and the energy and welcome from the team at Exmoor NPA*
- *Really great event - fantastic support by staff at Exmoor and beyond. Great location, well done for not having it in some remote large hotel.*

3.5 Catering was primarily provided by two local firms (Paradise Catering at the Tithe Barn and study tour lunches and Wild Pear at Horner Farm). Overall 94% of respondents rated the catering as very good or good.

### **Learning**

3.6 98% of respondents to the evaluation found the conference beneficial (44% extremely beneficial, 46% very beneficial and 8% somewhat beneficial).

- *Thought the last morning was absolutely brilliant. The discussions and presenters were hugely thought provoking and very engaging. They will directly affect my action in the coming years.*
- *I reported back to our AONB Partnership last week and challenged our members to take on board the themes of engaging new audiences and What does the nation need from its protected landscapes!*
- *I thought it was a brilliant session - certainly gave me a lot of food for thought.*

3.7 Individual elements of the conference were rated and the following shows the percentage rating each element as either 'Very good' or 'good';

- Overall balance of the programme – 90%
- Plenary sessions – 90%
- Relevance of speakers – 84% (12% rated this element neutral and 4% poor with some expressing disappointment with a speaker and a number of comments focusing on there being too much of an England only focus. High profile media speculation around potential changes to Government policy (within England) the same week as the conference may have skewed the focus of some speakers in this respect.
- Study tours – 96%

3.8 A number of comments were received around the need for more concrete actions coming out of the conference. This is a point that has been made with reference to previous conferences as well, but is a particular challenge given:

- It is a UK conference, but policy issues in relation to National Parks are devolved with different approaches taken in the three nations.
- There is not sufficient time, unless the conference was extended (significantly increasing the costs of running and attending it) to reach consensus.
- Those attending are representatives of their organisations and few, if any, are in a position to sign up their own Authority or organisation to actions or commitments. There may however be an opportunity at future events to agree more collectively some key messages as a 'conference' that delegates can take back to their own National Parks to endorse or follow up.

- On Exmoor a lack of a suitable venue with sufficient break out space was also a limiting factor.

### **Format**

3.9 Whilst there were two or three comments received on the evaluation expressing a preference for an integrated conference and accommodation location (which simply could not be provided within Exmoor), a number of others welcomed the new format:

- *I must confess I wasn't completely sold on this format ahead of time... but the improved clarity of which audience was being catered for gave this conference a coherence that I didn't feel in the same way at the two earlier ones I have attended.*
- *I liked the format this year*
- *The informal nature of the conference and the venue were excellent*
- *This is the way the conference should be run. Relatively modestly, spreading the benefits throughout the local community rather than the usual excesses of previous conferences in lavish venues and expensive accommodation. Congratulations to Exmoor for getting it spot on.*
- *Loved the balance of networking v delivery.*
- *The time available to us was used to its full potential, so made the long travelling time to reach Exmoor feel worthwhile.*
- *Overall brilliant balance to the event.*
- *I liked the format this year... I am very happy that this didn't smack of overspending which would have been inappropriate in the current climate.*
- *Exmoor was a great success and your decision to do it differently really paid off.*

## **4. Financials**

- 4.1 As set out in 1.5 above we sought to reduce the cost for participants and to mitigate against any additional burden on our own budgets as host.
- 4.2 Previous events had cost delegates c.£600 per person, as well as costing the host authority (£20,400 in 2019). The delegate fee this year was £190 excluding bed and breakfast. Allowing an average of £225 per person for 2 nights bed and breakfast plus the delegate fee brings the total cost per person to £415, a 30 % reduction.
- 4.3 Final accounts are still being prepared. However, thanks to the generous support of our conference sponsor (Dextra Group PLC) and our Study Tour sponsor (Ordnance Survey), combined with delegate fees and careful financial management, there will be no call on Authority funds to support delivery of the conference. This cost-neutral position includes allowance for a contribution against staff time managing the event.

**Dan James**  
**Rural Enterprise Manager**  
**October 2022**

**Appendix 1 – Conference Overview Report**



# UK National Parks' Conference Exmoor 2022

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What does the  
nation need from  
National Parks today?  
**Overview**



**27-29 September**  
**Dunster, Exmoor National Park**  
**#NPUKConf**





## 1. INTRODUCTION

The UK National Parks' Conference 2022 was hosted by Exmoor National Park Authority from the 27 to 29 September. It was generously sponsored by the Dextra Group PLC and brought together over 130 participants in total representing Members, Chief Executives and senior staff from all 15 of the UK National Parks alongside representatives from Government and partner organisations.

It was the first such gathering in 3 years and provided an important opportunity to regather, stepping aside from the day-to-day pressures, and to think strategically about the work of the National Parks.

When our National Parks were founded 70 years ago it was in response to a time of great national need following two world wars. The conference theme, 'What does the nation need from National Parks today?' provided an opportunity to reconsider the role of National Parks in response to current global challenges including the impact of Covid-19, the growing climate and nature crises, and cost of living challenges.

Speakers, primarily drawn from outside of the National Park 'family' were invited to give their views on the conference theme, focusing on 4 key challenges:

- Nature recovery
- Climate change
- Landscapes for all
- Green economic recovery

In addition to plenary sessions, based in the medieval village of Dunster a whole day of study tours, sponsored by the Ordnance Survey, provided delegates with the opportunity to meet a wide range of local communities, businesses, and partner organisations within Exmoor to share best practice and consider together the conference theme. A panel session on the final day gave an opportunity to reflect on what had been heard, seen, discovered and experienced. Participants were able to collectively consider the vital role National Parks should play in supporting the health and wellbeing of the nation in the 21st century.

This report is intended to give a snapshot of the conference only. Find more at [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/conf22](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/conf22) including:

- Audio recordings of the main plenary sessions, including the panel discussion.
- A short highlight video with speaker and delegate views

You can also search the hashtag **#NPUKConf** for associated social media posts.

## 2. CONFERENCE SUMMARY FROM KEME NZEREM, FACILITATOR



**Our conference facilitator, award winning journalist and keen outdoorsman, Keme Nzerem, shares his summary of the conference:**

The National Parks community is well versed in the practical and policy details of how our protected landscapes can help the UK make progress on many strategic goals - including but not limited to the conference themes:

- Nature recovery
- Climate change
- Landscapes for all
- Green economic recovery

The conference study tours and speakers all explored elements of these hugely important subjects, which I won't go into in depth here.

The conference format encouraged active learning and sharing of the Parks' collective expertise. As a keen and engaged member of the protected landscapes community, it was energising and exciting to witness and take part in these discussions. Words and phrases like "radical nature recovery", "partners in aspiration", "demonstrate what can be achieved", "support local economies and communities", "respect and reflect cultural differences between National Parks" threaded passion and belief through our 3 days of discussion and thought leadership.



But I was also curious to hear - as a newcomer to more technocratic discussions around Parks' operations and governance - how nervous the Parks are as a collective entity to use a collective brand to influence policy discussions.

UK National Parks' Chair **Di Clements** said in her opening address: "We need to capture the spirit we saw during covid and show what National Parks mean for the nation today".

How do the National Parks do this most effectively?

On one level this is practical. **Nick Giles** of Ordnance Survey noted that "National Parks are gateways to the outdoors and this comes with responsibility. We need to break down barriers – provide accessible routes, train people in map reading skills and build the knowledge and confidence to unlock the outdoors for more people".

But the strategic challenge before Parks is ultimately about leadership and influence.

**Emma Davies**, Nature Based Solutions partnership lead at Palladium, and **Naomi Conway**, Development Director at National Parks Partnerships said "The nation needs National Parks to be bolder and show leadership at the national level to address the nature and climate crises".

The Westminster politics of the days preceding the conference highlighted the strategic need for the protected landscapes community to understand and leverage its influence, if it is to make the most of its considerable expertise, and capabilities.

Much of this influencing currently takes place quietly, without a strong public facing stance. There are many reasons for this, not least the increasingly perilous public funding situation. Leaders are evidently and understandably nervous about saying the wrong thing.

But with respect to Welsh and Scottish colleagues, who on the face of it are not affected by potentially tricky relationships between the English National Parks and the Westminster government, there's a strong argument for the entire National Parks community to develop a more visible, intentional and potentially muscular "brand". The last few weeks have seen many independent charities like the RSPB and The National Trust take very challenging public stances on recent apparent changes to government policy. These organisations are obviously very different entities to the National Parks - but what opportunity does this open up?

There is potentially a clear space here for the National Parks and wider protected landscapes community to act as an independent "fact checking" voice, mapping the projected impact of social, economic and policy changes against longer term strategic goals. And to enter the public discussion with one voice explaining in accessible, transparent and non judgemental terms the real world impact of policy changes on long term strategy.

New policy always sits on a timeline of historic policy, which sits against measured progress. Being a respected voice that explains and highlights these trends might help bring clarity and visibility to the brand, without risking political retribution.



The National Parks' influence and impact are themes that have been explored in significant detail by **Julian Glover** in his review of Protected Landscapes in England.

The fragmented nature of National Parks' decision making is well documented. Julian repeated his belief that the Parks Community needs to find ways to speak to the bigger picture: "National Parks are locally based but need to work together for something bigger. We need collective action to demonstrate solutions... The National Parks movement needs to look up and out, and join things up".

On a community and participation level this means involving and empowering a wider range of people who might want to access National Parks' landscapes and experiences.

Exmoor Young Rangers **Billy and Logan** told the conference that for young people this is about more than just representation - and should include longer term commitments enabling activism, and pursuing green careers. Providing sustainable transport would make a big impact too.

**Soraya Abdel-Hadi** - founder of All the Elements - explained in great detail how Protected Landscapes belong to everyone, yet many people face both hard and soft barriers to enjoying the great outdoors. How do we make National Parks safe, attractive and welcoming for all UK communities? Soraya outlined a relatively simple solution: support and amplify the many grass roots groups already working in that space. These relationships need to be built and nurtured.

And this speaks to the existential public finance risk facing National Parks.

**Sarah Mukherjee**, CEO of the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment outlined it clearly: "National Parks shouldn't be exclusive citadels, they are paid for by the taxes of the whole nation. National Park Authorities can't assume that continued public funding is a given. They need to think about the unthinkable: who would campaign for them if they were under threat? We need connections with urban areas so that they become ambassadors and protectors".

One of the single most important constituencies in the National Parks community is of course our farmers, many (but not all of whom) are represented by the NFU. Following the government's "mini budget" and apparent proposed backtracking of ELMS, the existing national debate around nature recovery, carbon reduction and food security was reignited. At the centre of this is a well known tension between conventional farming and more future facing regenerative methods. NFU President **Minette Batters** urged the conference to not "allow there to be a rift between farming and the environment. We can deliver living, breathing landscapes and provide high quality, carbon neutral food ". But as well farmers have to run profitable businesses - and they are under immense pressure.

So in this glorious cacophony of needs and responsibilities - where is the collective voice of the National Parks? How does it address the key challenge laid out by this conference - "What does the nation need from National Parks?"

**Stanley Johnson** urged National Park leaders to speak up, and speak clearly - for the risk of losing our hard fought environmental protections are real.

So what does boosting National Parks' influence mean in practical terms for National Park leaders?

Veteran environmental campaigner now Chairman of Natural England **Tony Juniper** used the oft quoted phrase "Think Global, act local", but crucially added the word "compromise". National Parks' governance constraints clearly make compromise tricky - as for very good reason local oversight is baked in. It evidently makes it very hard to prioritise the bigger picture and speak with one voice.

Yet without that singular voice National Parks will continue to punch below their weight in the policy space.

**Dan Raven-Ellison**, guerrilla geographer and founder of Slow Ways told the conference:

"National Parks are diverse places with diverse issues, but they all share the same anxieties particularly around funding. Protected Landscapes need to be engines of hope and possibility to solve these problems. We need ideas, leadership, solutions - and unity".

This is some challenge - finding, and then expressing that unity.

**Keme Nzerem, Oct 2022**

### 3. SPEAKER QUOTES



National Parks are some of the UK's most treasured and valued landscapes, initially designated following a period of turmoil as the country recovered from the ravages of the Second World War. The challenges we face now are different but, in many respects, no less challenging. But we are uniquely able to lead and contribute to the responses to today's challenges.

**Di Clements**

Chair, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority  
and lead Chair of UK National Parks Forum

Revere shows the art of the possible for National Parks to set bold visions and targets and to demonstrate how together we can deliver for nature, using private finance and new economic models, working with farmers and land managers.

**Emma Davies (Palladium) and Naomi Conway (National Parks Partnerships)**



Our review (in England) hasn't YET achieved what it set out. But we will and we must. Sports get more money and attention, but UK landscapes offer as much, if not more to the nation, but are under resourced to deliver. We don't face a choice between nature and people. We need to focus on both and that is the mission of our National Parks. We need a bigger vision for our mission.

**Julian Glover OBE**

Journalist and Chair of the recent Landscape Review commissioned by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Young people will work hard, learn and make positive changes to National Parks, but need help. Sustainable travel is a major barrier to engaging young people more in National Parks. We understand this takes resources, but we want to be involved in the process, represented and included!

Exmoor Young Rangers, **Billy and Logan**



The nation needs National Parks UK that represent the nation. There are already a lot of people in under represented groups doing great work. National Parks need to build relationships with these groups to co- create opportunities for all. Invite us in!

**Soraya Abdel-Hadi**

Founder, All The Elements

You're remembered for what you do, not what you don't do. Everyone can show kindness to others and nature.

**Holly Purdey, Horner Farm,**  
talking about their approach to farming with the land and nature.



Green spaces are our saviour. The outdoors are our tonic. Memories made outside are critical to our wellbeing as a nation. Our National Parks are the gateway to the outdoors, and this comes with a responsibility. National Parks need to come together to promote the outdoors and ensure that the nation's love of outdoor pursuits is protected.

**Nick Giles**  
Managing Director, Ordnance Survey Consumer

All who care for our Protected Landscapes must call on the Government to restate their commitment to the statutory purposes of National Parks and nature protection system, refrain from environmentally damaging policies and activities in National Parks and ensure that key environmental legislation concerning or affecting National Parks and protected areas is not weakened.

**Stanley Johnson**  
Environmentalist and writer



Our commitment to total service places great importance on environmental and social governance. We're investing in nature based solutions & wish the UK National Parks a very bright future.

**Natasha Ward**  
Chief Operating Officer, Dextra Group (Conference Sponsor)

National Parks are one of humanity's best ideas and need to meet with the nation's populations. The majority of people are not where we are, and National Parks need to engage with urban areas. SlowWaysUK is a great opportunity in a practical way to link National Parks and urban areas... National Parks need strength, power, energy and leadership. But they are not resourced to support the need of the nation for these vital spaces. They are engine rooms of hope to address nature and climate emergencies but are unable to deliver effectively given a backdrop of cuts.



**Dan Raven-Ellison**  
Guerrilla Geographer and Slow Ways Founder





National Parks need to step up the pace of change in managing landscapes, particularly large scale nature recovery and climate mitigation. Find a way for every child to have a night under the stars and connect with nature so that everyone knows, loves and understands these beautiful places... We need to raise eyes above the horizon to meet huge challenges, to collaborate, link up and find a collective voice. My challenge to UK National Parks is to think strategically to deliver and operate.

**Sarah Mukherjee, MBE**  
Chief Executive IMEA

We have to talk about both food and the environment and deliver on both. National Parks need farmers to deliver land management. Farming has to be profitable to manage these precious landscapes. National Parks must not be museums to the past but doors to the future.

**Minette Batters**  
President of the National Farmers Union



The nation needs leadership from our National Parks. Big issues are becoming real - climate, nature, health and economic emergencies. How do National Parks deliver all the nation needs? By avoiding polarisation and integrating landscape management. Economy vs Environment is a fake choice, a sustainable economy needs restored nature and climate resilience. By working together and building partnerships, National Parks can use new tools to address these challenges.

**Dr. Tony Juniper**  
Environmentalist and Chair of Natural England.

What National Parks do, matters. And we have to do more, we have to work together, with the right resources to do more for people, landscape and nature.

**Sarah Bryan**  
Chief Executive, Exmoor National Park Authority



## 4. STUDY TOUR SUMMARY

### 1. Managing change

The challenges of managing change are common across all National Parks. The tour learnt about examples of managing change in river restoration with the introduction of beavers - nature's engineers, and how letting nature take its course can create wonderful new saltmarsh habitats. Change brings challenges and opportunities. Local estates are working with communities to respond, such as Porlock Manor Estate. Porlock Oysters is one example of a new enterprise working from the Estate. National Parks need to be leaders, work with communities, and avoid being a block on change.



Our study tours were kindly sponsored by:



## 2. Exmoor's Hidden Coast

Exmoor's hidden coast is epic, e-bikes make them accessible, and having fun refreshes your mind and body. National Parks need diversity of thought and to appreciate the different ways people choose to engage with these landscapes. Participants had the opportunity to hear about coastal conservation in partnership with the National Trust.



Our study tours were kindly sponsored by:



### **3. Transformations – stories from the heart of Exmoor**

This tour showcased the local community coming together and being part of restoring nature and heritage at White Rocks in Ashcombe. It highlighted collaboration with young businesses during a visit to Simonsbath Sawmill and celebrated engagement with young people and how outdoor learning builds connections with people and place at Pinkery Outdoor Centre.



Our study tours were kindly sponsored by:



#### 4. Chain reaction

National Parks need to take radical action for nature recovery and climate, demonstrate what can be achieved, and act as test beds. There has to be flexibility in Environmental Land Management Schemes to enable change. This tour walked part of the Two Moors Way and saw the Exmoor Mires Project first hand as well as a visit to Kipscombe Farm.



Our study tours were kindly sponsored by:



## 5. Signs, stars and saplings

The tour witnessed the virtuous cycle of sustainable woodland management, from establishing a tree nursery to growing saplings for planting at a new woodland, right through to harvesting and using timber for signposts and countryside furniture. Even 'rewilding' needs management! Participants also heard about the Authority's work as Europe's first International Dark Sky Reserve. Places visited included the National Park Authority's Field Services Depot and Tree Nursery, the Exford Dark Skies Hub and Bye Hill.



Our study tours were kindly sponsored by:



## 6. Living Landscapes

National Parks have to support the social and economic backdrop of communities, and the next generation, particularly the provision of affordable housing. It is vital to work alongside communities in positive partnerships to shape future land management, Farming in Protected Landscapes provides a good model for this. The tour visited the Holnicott Estate, met with Exmoor Young Voices and local housing groups as well as a visit to Cutcombe livestock market to meet with local farmers.



Our study tours were kindly sponsored by:



## 7. People, Place and Prosperity

This tour visited Lynton and Lynmouth, The Valley of Rocks and Parracombe. Participants witnessed how important it can be for National Parks to engage proactively with businesses and how simple actions that everyone can take can make a difference. Tourism partners are working together to manage tourism sustainably. Plastic Free Exmoor works with local partners and schools to encourage individuals to do their bit. Local communities are supporting the provision of facilities such as a local shop, affordable housing and village hall.



Our study tours were kindly sponsored by:





## 8. Managing honeypots, ponies and moorland

This multi-faceted tour visited Tarr Steps, one of Exmoor's most visited sites, the Moorland Mousie Trust and the Molland Estate. The passion for Exmoor shone through from the people who manage these special places and the challenges they face. Science, new technologies and innovation are being used to find solutions. It also highlighted the need to respect and reflect cultural differences between National Parks, and between local communities and visitors.



Our study tours were kindly sponsored by:



## 9. Innovation on Exmoor

We visited Singer Instruments, a hi-tech business operating in the Park, Wood Advent Farm developing new approaches to land management and experienced a part of the South West Coast Path. The tour demonstrated how businesses of all types exist in National Parks, rooted in their local communities and utilising Exmoor's natural capital. It showcased innovation in business and how National Parks can support rural enterprises in living lightly in the landscape.



Our study tours were kindly sponsored by:





## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY EXMOOR CONSULTATIVE AND PARISH FORUM NOTES

of the meeting of the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum held  
on Thursday 15 September 2022 at 7pm at Parracombe Village Hall

### PRESENT

Mike Ellicott	Exmoor National Park Authority and Chairman of the Forum
Alan Collins	Withypool and Hawkridge Parish Council
Andy Milne	ENPA Member
Nick Thwaites	ENPA Member
Kevin Connell	Winsford Parish Council
Roger Foxwell	Cutcombe Parish Council
Ron Buckingham	Elworthy Parish Council
Bob King	Lyn Community Development Trust
Eric Ley	ENPA Member
Andy Manning	Western Power Distribution
Chris Garnsworthy	Western Power Distribution
Colin McDonald	Somerset West and Taunton
Charles O'Connor	Exmoor Forest Farms
Sally Bastock	Resident
Darren Edwards	Fisher German
Jeremy Holtom	Parracombe Parish Council
Stephen Cheetham	Parracombe Parish Council

### 1. Apologies for absence were received from:

Vivian White	Exmoor National Park Authority and Deputy Chair of the Forum
Louise Crossman	Business Owner
Rachel Thomas	Exmoor Society
Catherine Nicholls	Winsford PC
Penny Webber	ENPA Member
Robin Milton	ENPA Member
Liz Bulled	North Devon District Council
Steven Pugsley	ENPA Member
Leslie Silverlock	Exmoor Young Voices
Frances Nicholson	ENPA Member
Susan J May	Exmoor Trust
John Wibberley	Resident
Jeremy Payne	Oare and Culbone Parish Meeting
John Anson	Cutcombe Parish Council
Sarah Buchanan	Brompton Ralph Parish Council
Alastair Rodway	Lynton and Lynmouth Parish Council
Andrew Bray	Wootton Courtenay Parish Council

### **National Park Authority staff in attendance:**

Dean Kinsella, Head of Planning and Sustainable Development  
Hazel Malcolm, Business Support Officer (Note Taker)

2. **MINUTES:** The [minutes](#) of the Forum meeting held on 23 June 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

**Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising

### **3. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR (Submitted in advance):**

1. Q. Small businesses on Exmoor. Increasing need for reliable broadband.

Mine tripped out 192 times (BT number) in a day recently including whilst I was in the middle of giving a presentation. What action is being taken to improve broadband reliability?

A. This subject is an agenda item for the NOVEMBER ECPF

2.Q. I would like to understand the distribution of the electrical system on Exmoor, does it pass through 1 or more primary nodes, substations and the "backup" systems along with alternative routing when the main connection is damaged as in the case of the recent power outage. Alternative re-routing? etc

It is also believed that the power transmission system is used to carry telecommunication for such companies as airband, could we have greater detail of just how this is accomplished. I assume they could break out from the power distribution system to server difficult placed to reach. Are the power "poles" used as mobile communication masts and also the emergency services?

A. Chris Garnsworthy of Western Power to answer during his agenda item

#### **3. Q.**

1. I notice that my main fuse is rated at 100 amps. What is the planned rating for each domestic dwelling when designing the distribution network? Would this be enough for, for example, a heat pump, 1/2 electric vehicles plus normal usage?
2. Are you continuing with "chargeable reinforcements" for customers who's needs require the infrastructure beyond their boundary to be upgraded?
3. Are the upgrades in this sparsely populated area expected to be a commercial proposition or are you likely to need subsidy like the distributors of broadband did?

A. Chris Garnsworthy of Western Power to answer during his agenda item

### **4. DISTRIBUTION OF POWER ON EXMOOR.**

Chris Garnsworthy, Regional Distribution Manager for Somerset and Andy Manning, Regional Distribution Manager for Devon both of Western Power Distribution gave a presentation on the local electricity network operated by Western Power. Western Power will join the National Grid Group soon. Some of the examples of the work carried out by Western Power on Exmoor include undergrounding of cables and new

cabling which has taken place recently at Porlock. One of the largest yet most important aspects and costs of maintaining the network is the work involved in cutting back trees near electricity cabling.

The presentation can be found [here](#).

## **5. SUSTAINABLE ENERGY**

Darren Edwards, Head of Sustainable Energy for Fisher German gave a presentation on the work of Fisher German and sustainable energy. There is an increasing need for sustainable energy due to climate change and the UK's climate change commitment of Net Zero by 2050. UK energy prices have risen because of increased demand and external supply issues, this is in turn driving consumers increasingly to look at alternative energy sources. The presentation detailed how Exmoor NPA Planning Policy supports sustainable energy developments.

The presentation can be found [here](#)

## **6. SOMERSET RURAL HOUSING ENABLER**

Colin McDonald is the Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) for Somerset. Colin outlined the work he is involved in and made the point that RHE advice on general matters can cover the whole Exmoor area whereas site specific advice or help for local groups would be just the Somerset side of the national park. A large part of the Rural Housing Enabler's role is to provide advice and guidance on the planning and finance available for affordable housing on Exmoor.

The presentation can be found [here](#)

## **7. EMERGING ISSUES OR TOPICS FOR WIDER DEBATE**

These future agenda items were suggested by the Forum:

- Superfast Broadband rollout across Exmoor
- A summary from the National Parks UK Conference to be hosted this year by Exmoor NP at Dunster.

The above two topics are agenda items for the next ECPF meeting in November.

Forum Members were reminded to send any issues for discussion at future Forum meetings to Hazel Malcolm [hamalcolm@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:hamalcolm@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

## **8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 17 November at 10:30am at Exmoor House, Dulverton.

## **9. OTHER BUSINESS OF URGENCY**

There was none.



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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 September 2022

**by Mrs H Nicholls FdA MSc MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 29 September 2022**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/F9498/W/22/3294703**

**Martinhoe Manor, Woody Bay, Parracombe, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 4QX**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mrs Marjorie Ng against the decision of Exmoor National Park Authority.
  - The application Ref 62/43/21/003, dated 20 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 October 2021.
  - The development proposed is change of use of main building to single dwellinghouse.
- 

### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for change of use of main building to single dwellinghouse at Martinhoe Manor, Woody Bay, Parracombe, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 4QX, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 62/43/21/003, dated 20 August 2021, and the plans submitted therewith.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the supply of smaller dwellings within the local housing stock.

### Reasons

3. The existing building is currently subdivided into seven separate units of accommodation. Six have been used for holiday accommodation purposes for a substantial period. One of the units has been occupied by the owners/managers of the building. None of the units are restricted to use only for holiday accommodation by planning condition. The building stands in expansive wooded grounds within a striking coastal setting which falls within Exmoor National Park. There are no nearby settlements, although there are a few other residential dwellings scattered within the wider surroundings.
4. The proposal seeks to amalgamate the seven smaller units into one large dwelling, arguably restoring a former use of the original building which has since been extended. Having regard to the parties' differing views on the matter, I consider that such an amalgamation would result in a material change in use and shall deal with the appeal on this basis.
5. It is accepted by the Authority that there are no specific policies that deal with amalgamations within the *Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (2017)* (Local Plan), although there is a policy for subdivisions. The policies cited by the Authority include GP1, HC-S1 and HC-S2. HC-S1 and HC-S2 collectively seek to address the housing needs of local communities and ensure a mix of

dwellings (in terms of size, type and tenure), that will meet the needs of present and future generations. Policy GP1 seeks to support the delivery of sustainable development in the National Park which includes a commitment to provide for a size, type and tenure of housing to address local affordable needs and help create a balanced community.

6. The Authority's decision notice states that the loss of these "affordable" dwellings would cause harm to the balance in the housing stock, and undermine the ability to redress the balance where larger detached dwellings dominate. The use of the term 'affordable' appears to have created confusion, with much of the appellant's statement referring to formally-defined affordable housing and registered social landlords. It is clear to me that there would be no loss of formally-defined affordable housing with local needs restrictions. As such, I have treated the units as 7 modestly-sized unrestricted apartments, although I accept the Authority's stance that such units are typically more affordable on the open market than larger market units.
7. Whilst I understand the thrust of the development plan to provide a range of housing to meet the needs of the community across the finite land resource within the National Park, there is no specific policy with which the proposal is in direct conflict. Words cannot be imported to any of the policies that the Authority wish were there and thus, taken on their face, they do not apply to amalgamations. The development plan is therefore silent on the nature of the proposal before me which does not involve the creation of any new housing.
8. The appellant refers to the presumption in favour of sustainable development which is a reference to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), where in paragraph 11 d) it states that where there are no development plan policies, or the most important policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless, i) specific policies of the Framework that protect areas or assets of importance provide a clear reason for refusal, or, ii) any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.
9. I have considered the form and appearance of the dwelling and both its immediate and wider setting, all of which would be unchanged by the proposal. Consequently, I do not consider that any policies of the Framework which protect the National Park as an area of scenic and landscape beauty provide a clear reason for refusal of the proposal. On the other hand, an absence of harm is only capable of attracting neutral weight in the overall balance.
10. Given the rural location of the building, I consider that a likely lower intensity use as a single dwelling than as 7 apartments (holiday use or otherwise), would be more appropriate in terms of sustainable travel patterns and reducing the number of vehicles that have to access via the narrow coast road which is intersected by the South West Coast Path. This reduction in intensity of use and vehicle movements attracts weight as a limited benefit of the scheme.
11. I am mindful that granting planning permission would deny any potential future occupiers the chance to purchase a modestly-sized apartment. However, size is not the only factor that influences affordability and, to this end, the rural location, exquisite natural setting and the range of available sea views is still likely to keep the sale values higher than would be typical of units absent of such features. This also suggests that preventing the amalgamation and



insisting that they are maintained as seven apartments would be likely to achieve little of the rebalancing of the local housing stock that could benefit the community. Whilst this should not deter the Authority from seeking such opportunities where they realistically exist and where the development plan policies are strictly applicable, there are factors in this case that suggest that the outcomes would be of negligible benefit here.

12. For the foregoing reasons, there would be no significant or demonstrable adverse impacts that would outweigh the benefits of the scheme when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole. This is a material consideration of such significance that suggests that the decision should be taken other than in accordance with the development plan.

### **Other Matters**

13. I have considered the submitted representation which indicates that the loss of holiday units from such a special building and location would be an unfortunate outcome. Whilst it is clear that the building has played an important part in the visits of many tourists to the area, I do not consider that the loss would be material, with two separate small-scale letting facilities being retained on site and an absence of evidence to suggest that there is a lack of tourist accommodation in this part of the National Park.

### **Conditions**

14. The Authority suggested a condition to require that the resultant large dwelling should be used as a principal residence rather than as a single holiday home or second home. The rationale offered for this condition is given as Policy HC-S1 which seeks to avoid the potential for additional second or holiday homes in the locality, though the units can already be used for such purposes.
15. The preamble to Policy HC-S4 appears to provide an indication of the use for such a condition where it states that: "*Principal Residence housing will therefore only be permitted in very specific circumstances where it can be demonstrated to be essential to enable the delivery of affordable housing schemes in accordance with policies HC-D2 Conversions to Dwellings in Settlements or HC-D3 New Build Dwellings in Settlements*". As the units can already be used as holiday homes and the resultant dwelling is not intended as a means of cross-subsidising any other form of housing, the condition does not have a sound policy basis and I do not consider that imposing it would meet the tests for conditions set out in the Framework.

### **Conclusion**

16. For the foregoing reasons, the appeal is allowed.

*Hollie Nicholls*

INSPECTOR

# 15.1



## Committee Report

Application Number:	62/41/22/001
Registration Date:	04-Jan-2022
Determination Date:	16-Feb-2022
Applicant	Mr. D James, Brean Beach Holiday Parks Limited
Agent:	Mr. P Terry, Glampitect Ltd
Case Officer:	Curtis Badley
Site Address:	Manor Farm, Lynton, Devon, EX35 6LD
Proposal:	Proposed siting of 5 no. timber and canvas glamping safari tents, permeable parking / turning area with 6 no. parking bays, with a double EV charging point, recycling / waste facilities, associated footpaths, landscaping, composting toilets and an underground water treatment plant for drainage treatment.'
Recommendation:	Approve with conditions
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	In accordance with the Scheme of delegation as the Officer recommendation of approval is contrary to the Town Council view

### Relevant History

**62/41/20/022** Lawful development certificate for the proposed use of land all year round as a camping site. Approved - 03/01/2021

**62/41/21/036** Proposed erection of decking area for use as base for single bell tent. Approved with Conditions - 01/12/2022

**62/41/82/007** Revised layout of camping and caravan site and relaxation of Condition No 2 of Planning Permission No 62/41/81/007 and relaxation of Section 52 agreement attached to application No 62/41/77/011 to allow shop and licensed recreation room to be open to the general public - Approved - 04/21/1982

### Site Description & Proposal

Lynmouth Holiday Retreat (also known as Channel View Caravan Park) is a caravan site that accommodates tented camping, touring caravans and campervans and also hosts holiday chalets. The caravan park operates from Manor Farm which is located just over 1km south of Lynmouth and to the Northeast of Barbrook.

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The application site extends westwards from the existing holiday facilities and overlooks the Lynn Valley. The total land area measures just over 4.5 hectares, with the site comprising an area of scrubby / grassland less than 0.2 hectares (half an acre). The boundaries are formed of mature hedgerows with individual trees which separate the site from the A39 and West Lyn Road to the East and South and with West Lyn Farm and the open fields to the North and West.

The site benefits from an existing grant of planning permission in 1982 (reference: 62/41/82/007) for the siting of tents for recreational purposes, without any limitations on the number or layout of tents, or the time of year or period of time per calendar year that tents can be erected. The site also benefits from a Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development in 2020 (reference: 62/41/20/022) which confirms that use of site for the siting of tents for recreational purposes all year round would not constitute a material change of use.

The application seeks planning permission for the operational development associated with the erection of five timber and canvas 'glamping safari tents' with a permeable parking / turning area and an upgraded underground wastewater / drainage treatment plant at Lynmouth Holiday Retreat, Manor Farm.

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## **Consultee Representations**

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**Lynnton and Lynmouth Town Council** objects to the application for the following reasons:

The proposal site is in an area that has not been used for camping and is fenced-off scrub, and not related to existing buildings - see policy RT-D10, 8.75 and 8.78. The following we do not feel are policy compliant:

- Policy RT-D5, referencing paragraph 8.45;
- Policy CE-S2 – light from footpaths and fixed tents;
- Policy CE-D1 – impact on landscape and seascape; and
- Policy RT-D9 – does not comply with paragraph 8.64 drainage and 8.67 parking.

### **Exmoor National Park Authority Wildlife Conservation Officer:**

Welcomes the intention to conserve biodiversity on site and create an overall positive impact on the natural environment, but raises concern over the potential impact of the works on existing habitats on site. The Officer notes that whilst the applicant has stated that the siting of tents will not require removal of grass or topsoil except for the footings, it is not clarified how many footings will be needed. In addition, there is mention of some levelling of the ground, there will be gravel drainage around each tent base, footpaths and an area of parking which will all presumably require removal of the current vegetation and topsoil. Looking at the photographs that have been helpfully

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provided, whilst it is not clear what works are intended for each area shown, the site appears to comprise areas of rough grassland and scrub which provide potential for protected species including reptiles and badger, for example. As such, I recommend an ecologist visits the site and a PEA is undertaken to assess the habitats present, potential for and evidence of protected species and assess the likely impacts of the proposals.

Whilst there has been consideration to limiting lighting in the design, which is welcomed, there is no indication of lighting on the tents.

The proposed planting of shrubs and trees, and the siting of bird and bat boxes is welcomed as biodiversity enhancement.

The Officer suggests that if permission is granted (once we have clarified the concerns raised above), then a condition is applied requiring submission of a biodiversity enhancement plan showing the proposals, detailing the species and boxes proposed.

**The ENPA Future Landscapes Officer** advises that during pre-app consultation, additional information was recommended to be submitted that would provide an accurate indication of the tree positions and canopy spreads on the western / north-western boundary, in order to assess the proximity of the tents to the trees and the potential impact on them as these are key screening trees. This information has not been provided.

The Officer has commented on the original application, which was for 9 safari tents (it is now 5); and notes that the site slopes steeply to the north-west. The submitted information shows platforms for the safari tents projecting out from the slope and supported on posts. The elevation of the tents and the raised platforms would make them more prominent. There will still be significant amount of excavation required for foundations and services.

The tents will be visible from the nearby Station Hill to the west, seen across the valley on higher ground, particularly along the section near the old Station House. The existing trees provide some screening but the tents will be very noticeable. The tents would also be visible from the A39 to the south-west, more so in winter. The existing static caravans can be seen in these views and touring caravans will be visible when the site is open.

If planning consent is granted, I would request that the lighting is conditioned to minimise impacts on the night sky and the colour of materials to ensure they are as recessive as possible. I would also prefer to see some mitigation planting, especially to more visually open boundaries, and tree planting within the site.

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No other consultee representations received.

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## Representations

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Three representations have been received from members of the public which do not object to the proposed scheme but do raise concern with respect to the additional road traffic to and from the site. These comments note that campsite traffic gets directed (by SatNav) down Lyn Lane and West Lyn Road, a single-track, with difficult bends which are unsuitable for caravans and camper vans.

The comments note that there is currently a 'Lynmouth Retreat' sign at the junction of Lyn Lane and the A39, from the Hillsford Bridge direction but it is small, faded and difficult to view. The representations request that the authority considers making improved signage to and from the site part of the permission, especially from the Hillsford Bridge direction.

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## Policy Context

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

GP1	Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable development
CE-S1	Landscape and Seascape Character
CE-D1	Protecting Exmoor's landscape and seascape
CE-S2	Protecting Exmoor's Dark Night Sky
CE-S3	Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
CE-S4	Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment
CE-S6	Design & Sustainable Construction Principles
AC-D1	Transport and Accessibility Requirements for Development
CC-S1	Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption
RT-D5	Tented camp sites
RT-D9	Alternative camping
RT-D12	Access Land and Rights of Way
CC-S6	Waste Management
CC-D5	Sewerage Capacity and Sewage Disposal
CC-S7	Pollution

Lynnton and Lynmouth Neighbourhood Plan 2013

Policy P1	Overall objectives
Policy ENV1	Location of development and enhancement of local environment
Policy E1	Local economy
Policy E10	Parking
Policy S2	Improving existing services and facilities

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

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## **Planning Considerations**

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The key issues are the principle of development, landscape and visual impact, and biodiversity.

### **Principle of development**

Policy GP1 of the Local Plan sets out criteria for achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development. These include criteria that seek to protect the amenities of local residents and conserve or enhance the quiet enjoyment of the National Park.

Policy RT-D4 allows the creation of non-serviced holiday accommodation as part of diversification for rural land-based businesses through the conversion of a building that is well related to an existing grouping of buildings.

RT-D5 allows small extensions to tented camp sites where there would be no harm to environment and includes criteria with respect to permanence.

RT-D9 allows small-scale, low impact alternative camping accommodation where the units would:

- only be used for the purposes of holiday accommodation;
- be small-scale in terms of area and number of units and will not require additional permanent residential accommodation to manage the site;
- have a net floor space of each unit is less than 25sqm and not connected to a foul drainage system;
- achieve high quality sustainable design and demonstrate that the siting and landscaping strongly relate to the landscape and historic character of the area;
- be appropriate to the setting
- have low environmental impact through limited physical connection with the ground by ensuring that any hard-standing and site works are minimal to complement the natural topography and landscape character of the area; avoiding extensive alteration to ground levels and fencing;
- need for additional facilities is clearly demonstrated and commensurate with the level of anticipated need, are provided within an existing building or as a modest extension to existing facilities; and
- where the need for additional parking is demonstrated, provision should reflect the minimum level of need.

Policy requires that there are no adverse impacts on sensitive habitats and wildlife.

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Policy stipulates that conditions will be attached to any permission to ensure that the site will be occupied and managed in a manner that will not harm the local area. Opportunities should be taken to enhance the restoration of the site that will support biodiversity and green infrastructure.

Policy P1 of the Lynton and Lynmouth Neighbourhood Plan (NP) supports sustainable development that will enhance the self-reliance of the local community and economy and underpins the assets of the community.

Policy ENV1 states that previously developed sites within the existing extent of the settlements of Lynton, Lynmouth and Barbrook are the preferred locations for development.

Policy E1 supports economic development where it would not have a significant harmful impacts on the local community or prevent them meeting their needs, significant harmful impacts on visitors and visitor attractions and facilities; and proposals should not have significant harmful impacts on the natural and historic environment of the area or the built environment of the settlements.

Policy S2 supports proposals for the improvement of existing services and facilities and the provision of new services and facilities of use to the community will be supported, provided that the proposals would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of residents or on other neighbouring uses.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraphs 84 and 85) supports the conversion of existing buildings in rural areas where the development is sensitive to its surroundings.

On the 1st March 2021, a Lawful Development Certificate was granted for the use of the land (and additional land that is outside the planning application area) all year round as a camping site. On the basis of this certificate (reference: 62/41/20/022) which contains the area of the proposed works, a change of use of the land is not being considered and only the operational development being undertaken on site.

The proposed development is five timber and canvas 'glamping safari tents' set on wooden decks with internal space of 25m<sup>2</sup>. They would use composting toilets and water facilities would be dispersed through a soakaway. It is the view of the Planning Officer that the proposal is acceptable in principle, specifically in terms of the degree of permanence and noting the scope of the Lawful Development Certificate. Consideration is required with respect to other material considerations; in particular the impact on the setting and landscape character.

The application also seeks planning permission to upgrade the existing water treatment that serves the campsite. A minor extension to an underground tank is proposed to improve the quality and robustness of the system and this is acceptable in principle in the context of these policies.

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## Design

The development would involve the creation of a formal vehicle access into the site at its southeast boundary, extending westwards from the existing camp site. A permeable surface would be provided at the southern end of the site. Parking for six cars, including two EVs would be located here along with recycling / waste collection facilities. From this area permeable tracks would lead to each of the five canvas glamping safari tents. Three tents would be in the immediate vicinity, with a further two in the western most field. An existing post and rail fence would be modified to enclose the southern area and a gate would provide pedestrian access into the western field.

The tents would be sites on wooden decks and limited levelling would be required to create suitable footings. The internal space of each tent would be 25m<sup>2</sup> and have a maximum height of 4m. Each tent would include space for two beds, a sink, cooking hobs and a compost toilet; as well as a shower and sink that would be dispersed through a gravel soakaway. The tents would be installed adjacent to ground levels and at varying levels relative to each other. Broken ground would be re-instated (turfed where required); and suitable shrubbery planted around any required decking to demarcate the tents and provide additional screening. Further, the design of the site has been considered so that if the development was removed, the site could be returned to its former nature due to the un-intrusive nature and construction methods of the tents.

It is considered that the proposed operational development does not involve an adverse change in the intensity of use or activity of the Site that has already been permitted and allowed as demonstrated in the lawful development certificate for all year-round use as a camping site.

## Landscape

The Exmoor National Park Future Landscapes Officer has commented upon the application and notes the natural slope of the north-west field to which the safari tents are proposed to be sited. In this position the tents on raised platforms would be visible from the nearby Station Hill to the west and would be visible across the valley on higher ground, particularly along the section near the old Station House. The Officer has noted that existing trees provide some screening, but the tents would be very noticeable. The Officer also notes that the tents would also be visible from the A39 to the south-west, which is accentuated in the winter and that the existing static caravans and touring caravans can also be seen within these views and will be visible when the site is open.

The proposed development has been amended from the originally submitted scheme, reducing the number of tents in the more visible northwest field to two. The three other tents are to be sited in the more secluded southern field. The proposed tents



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are proposed to be embedded into the natural slope of the landscape and would be made of a khaki / green colour which is considered to be more recessive in the landscape compared with the backdrop of white caravans which can utilise this field all year round as previously outlined within the Lawful Development Certificate.

As part of the application proposals, additional planting is proposed in order to enhance the existing natural screening available on site and verdant character of the surrounding area. In addition to this planting of shrubbery between the proposed tents is considered to break up the form of each unit and this in combination with the planting and maintenance of meadow grass is considered to enhance the natural landscape opportunities on site – minimising the grassed lawn areas. In consideration of the potential use of the site as year-round tented accommodation and the low number of natural-coloured tents interspersed with planting, the proposed development is considered to preserve qualities of the surrounding landscape setting. The proposal is therefore unlikely to create an adverse impact upon the surrounding area on this basis.

### **Ecology**

Policy CE-S3 requires that the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and habitats be given great weight and that development likely to cause harm to legally protected species or lead to the loss of damage to their habitats will not be permitted, unless this can be mitigated or then offset.

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) has been submitted with the application. The site area comprises of amenity grassland, an area of dense bracken and ruderals with a small area of scrub. These habitats and the surrounding hedgerow provide opportunity for foraging and commuting bats and reptiles as well as some suitability for nesting and foraging birds and small mammals. It is considered that suitable recommendations have been made in Section 5 of the PEA report including sensitive lighting and precautionary methods of work with respect to reptiles and these recommendations have been secured by way of condition in addition to further informatives relating to the legal protection afforded to bats and birds.

The site has been identified as an opportunity for wildlife enhancement which has been illustrated within the application drawings which show the installation of a bird box and bat box as well as a native hedge bank. A condition has been attached which seeks the erection of at least four bat boxes and six bird boxes in suitable locations on mature trees on or adjacent to the site. It is noted that these should ideally be constructed from long-lasting material such as woodcrete. It is therefore considered that appropriate biodiversity enhancement can be secured as part of this application and the proposed development is considered to meet the requirements of Policy CE-S3 and of the NPPF.

Policies CE-S1, CE-D1 and CE-S2 seek to protect the landscape and Exmoor's Dark Night Sky from inappropriate development. The proposed lighting scheme has been

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omitted to protect the dark sky and tranquillity of the surrounding area. A condition is applied that no additional lighting is installed without the express consent of the ENPA to ensure these qualities are retained.

## **Highways And Parking**

Policy AC-D1 and Policy AC-D2 of the Local Plan and Policy E10 of the Neighbourhood Plan require that the design and details of highway works are appropriate in scale to the development and contribute to the conservation or enhancement of the area; and do not prejudice highway safety.

The proposed extension of the existing holiday site proposes direct pedestrian access to the five safari tents. Vehicle parking for six cars is made available close to the entrance to the site, within a permeable parking area and turning circle. Two of these spaces afford access to an electric car charging point and a further of these spaces has greater clearance for better accessibility. In addition to car parking, cycle parking is also provided within this area. The site is accessible from the existing sites internal road network and would share the primary road entrance with the existing holiday site onto the A39. In consideration of the spaces provided, limited number of glamping safari tents installed and linkage to the existing internal road network and access, the proposal is not considered to create an adverse impact upon highway safety or parking. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with policies AC-D1 and Policy AC-D2 of the Local Plan and policy E10 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Two representations have, been received expressing concern with respect to the extra road traffic to and from the site and the directions provided by SatNav down Lyn Lane and West Lyn Road which are single-track and possess difficult bends unsuitable for caravans and camper vans. Whilst these comments are acknowledged and it is noted that there may be insufficient directional signage available within the vicinity of the site, the application site area is limited and excludes the surrounding road layout and land adjacent to the A39. Any proposed signage would therefore be outside of the consideration and control of this planning application, and it is also noted that further consents may be required to erect signage relating to highways.

## **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

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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 152 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 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. However, the limited form and construction type as well as the ongoing use as low-scale tourist accommodation is considered to weigh in favour of the proposal.

The provision of charging points for two Electric Vehicles and a cycle rack encourages more sustainable transport options and creation of a new drainage system and recycling centre is considered to benefit and suitably service the new accommodation. Officers consider that the impact on the climate resulting from the construction and ongoing use of the proposed development would not create an adverse impact upon the climate

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### **Human Rights**

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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**

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The proposed development comprises an upgrade, including extension, of an existing sewerage system; and the siting of five safari tents. The proposals are considered to meet the requirements and objectives of the Local Plan given the context of a Lawful Development Certificate, which allows year-round camping across the whole application area.

Specifically, the tents would provide low impact holiday accommodation that meets the permanence tests of Policies RT-D5 and RT-D9. The proposal is considered to be acceptable subject to conditions attached below which seek to protect the night sky, the landscape and to secure biodiversity enhancement.

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## Recommendation

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Approve with 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 plans stamped by the Local Planning Authority as:

- Location plan (Reference 210821-01-01 Revision A) (ENPA stamped 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022, File No.1)
- Proposed Site Layout Plan (Reference: 210821-01-03 Revision D) (ENPA stamped 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022, File No.11)
- Landscape Plan (Reference 210821-01-10 Revision E) (ENPA stamped 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022, File No.16)
- Drainage Plan (Reference 210821-01-04 Revision E) (ENPA stamped 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022, File No.13)
- Elevations and Floor Plans (Reference 210821-09-01 Revision A) (ENPA stamped 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022, File No.4)

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

3. The proposed glamping safari tents hereby approved shall only be used in association with the camping facilities at Lynmouth Holiday Retreat (also known as Channel View Caravan Park). It shall not be used for any other purposes.

Reason: To ensure that the development is used for the purpose that has been applied for, in the interests of protecting the landscape, neighbouring amenity and highway safety.

4. The units hereby permitted shall not be occupied until suitable parking spaces have been provided in accordance with the Proposed Site Layout Plan (Reference: 210821-01-03 Revision D) (ENPA stamped 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022, File No.11). These spaces and access shall be properly consolidated and surfaced and shall thereafter be kept clear of obstruction at all times and not used other than for the parking of vehicles or for the purpose of access.

Reason: To ensure safe and suitable off-street parking space is provided, in accordance with Policy AC-D3 of the Development Plan.

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5. The development hereby permitted shall not be used or occupied other than for the provision of short let holiday accommodation and shall not at any time be used, let, sold or otherwise occupied as a separate unit of accommodation. No person, couple, family or group shall occupy or use the accommodation hereby permitted for a single period or cumulative periods exceeding 28 days in any calendar year.

Reason: To ensure that the development is only used and occupied as short let holiday accommodation and to prevent the creation of an unjustified separate dwelling in the Exmoor National Park, in accordance with Policy RT-D9 of the Development Plan.

6. The owner/operator of the holiday accommodation hereby approved shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names and main home addresses of all occupiers and shall make this register available to the Authority for inspection upon request.

Reason: To ensure that the development is only used and occupied as short let holiday accommodation and to prevent the creation of an unjustified separate dwelling in the Exmoor National Park, in accordance with Policy RT-D9 of the Development Plan.

7. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations made in Section 5 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report prepared by Orbis Ecology including sensitive lighting and precautionary methods of work with respect to reptiles.

Reason: To enhance wildlife and habitats on site.

8. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the approved planting and shall be maintained hereafter as set out within the associated Landscaping Plan (Reference 210821-01-10 Revision E) (ENPA stamped 18th October 2022, File No.16)

Reason: To improve the visual amenity of the surrounding area and enhance wildlife and habitats on site.

9. At least six integrated bird boxes and at least four bat boxes shall be erected in suitable locations on mature trees on or adjacent to the site. These should ideally be constructed from long-lasting material such as Woodcrete.

Reason: To enhance wildlife and habitats on site.

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## Informatives

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### **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](mailto:plan@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk).

### **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.

### **Conditions and Informatives and the submission of any 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. 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

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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.

### **Nesting Birds**

The developer 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 work must stop until the young have fledged and advice is sought from a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity.

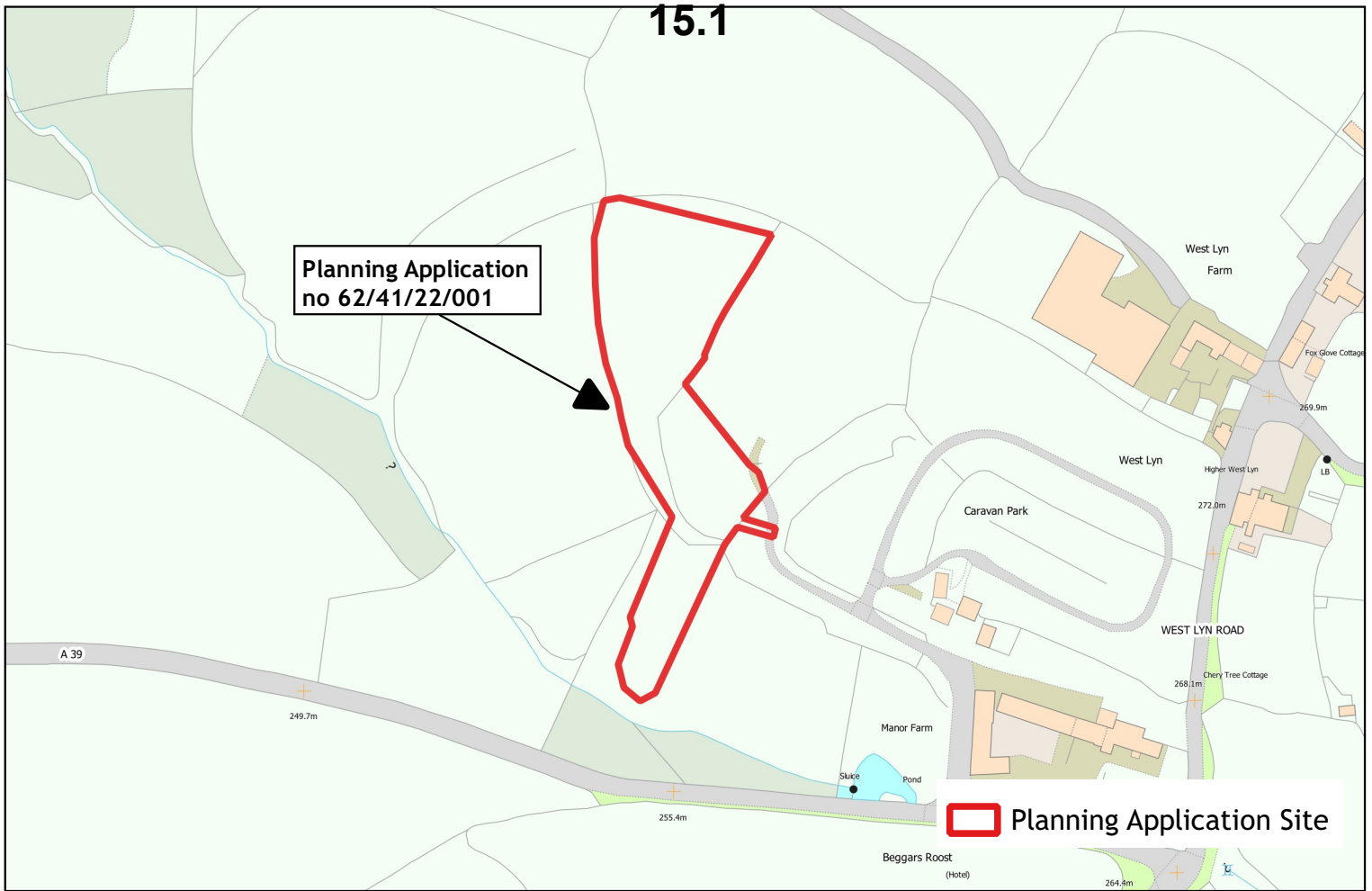
### **Bats and Roosting Birds**

The developers and their contractors are reminded of the legal protection afforded to bats and bat roosts under legislation including the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. 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.

### **Building Regulations**

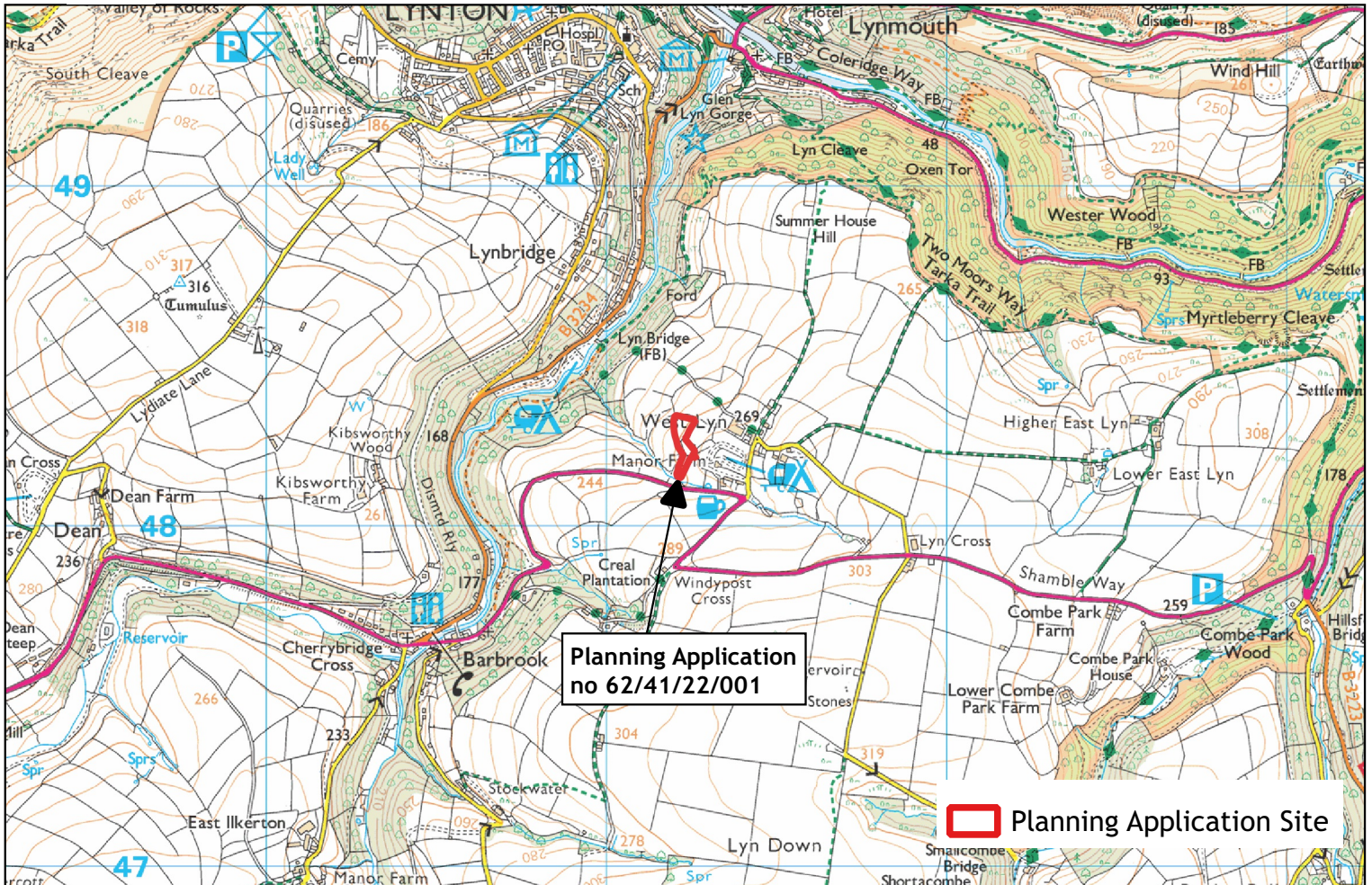
If this development involves any building or engineering works, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that any consent under the Building Regulations is also obtained before work begins. For further advice contact North and Mid Devon Building Control Partnership on 01884 234974 or by email to [mail@nmdbuildingcontrol.co.uk](mailto:mail@nmdbuildingcontrol.co.uk)

Planning Application no 62/41/22/001



Site Map  
Scale 1:2,500

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Overview Map  
Scale 1:20,000

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## Committee Report

Application Number:	6/27/22/118
Registration Date:	22-Sep-2022
Determination Date:	03-Oct-2022
Applicant	Mr & Mrs Keal
Agent:	Mrs. L Crossman, Louise Crossman Architects
Case Officer:	Chris Tivey
Site Address:	KEAL RISE, HAWKCOMBE, PORLOCK, MINEHEAD, TA24 8QW
Proposal:	Proposed variation of conditions 2 and 4 of approved application 6/27/16/102 for the installation of external Cedral fibre cement cladding in place of red cedar timber cladding.
Recommendation:	Refuse.
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	Porlock Parish Council have a view that is contrary to the recommendation of Officers and support the proposal.

### Relevant History

**6/27/16/102** - Proposed self-build affordable home with an internal floor area less than 90m<sup>2</sup> and with exterior excavation and in-fill work to create a new access route and driveway together with further information for temporary accommodation that will be occupied whilst the work to the main property is undergone and removed immediately after. As per amended information 13.05.16. (Full).  
Approved 01/09/2016.

### Site Description & Proposal

The application site lies to the western side of Parson's Street, in Hawkcombe, Porlock and once comprised part of the former gardens of the adjacent property to the south known as 'Hawcombe House'. The site slopes steeply up in a westerly direction, with a leat running through the site in an approximate north-south alignment. The area of the site to the east of the leat runs broadly parallel to, and just outside of, the boundary of the Porlock Conservation Area.

Planning permission was granted in 2016 for a self-build affordable home in 2016, subject to the imposition of conditions. The permission permitted the erection of a two storey dwelling, cut into the sloping site and was proposed to be finished with timber cladded elevations under a slate roof with timber windows and doors. The dwelling is substantially complete.

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Condition 2 of the planning permission required compliance with the approved plans, whilst condition 4 was concerned with external finishing materials and reads as follows:

“The construction of the walls and roof of the dwelling, hereby approved, shall be in accordance with the sample natural slate and sample cedar wall cladding submitted on 22/08/2016 in support of the application and shall remain in accordance with the approved materials thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority”.

The reasons for the imposition of both conditions was “For the avoidance of doubt and to make sure the development accords with the approved plans”; and “In the interest of visual amenity, the character and appearance of the development, and adjacent Conservation Area” respectfully.

The application under Section 73 of the Town and County Planning Act 1990 (as amended) which is before Members seeks non-compliance with both of these conditions, to enable the retrospective use of Cedral fibre cement cladding in place of red cedar timber cladding to the elevations of the building. The shade proposed is from the manufacturer’s ‘Earth Range’ C03 Grey Brown RAL 1019.

In support of their application, the applicants state that in 2020/21 when construction of the dwelling was sufficiently progressed to consider installation of the cedar cladding, this was found to be significantly more expensive and difficult to obtain due to Covid and supply issues than anticipated. Consequently, it was decided to progress with the use of fibre cement cladding know as ‘Cedral’ which is a composite material made from cement, water and cellulose fibres with a grained finish to appear as wood. The manufacturer stipulates that Cedral Lap Fibre Cement Weatherboard is a low maintenance, rot resistant, factory painted, fire resistant cladding board.

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### **Consultee Representations**

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**Porlock Parish Council** – Support the proposal, but also state that they are concerned that the material, as it ages, will not mature to the same colour that would most likely been evident in the case of the timber cladding. Accordingly, they would like to suggest that the material be painted with a suitable colour to approximate to what the timber cladding might age to. They do however appreciate that the colour of the material is inherent in the cladding itself and there may be practical issues in the periodic application of paint or stain.

**ENPA Historic Buildings Officer** – Objects to the proposal. They refer to their predecessors’ comments that he made in relation to application 6/27/16/102: “The impact on the conservation area would essentially be neutral and there is therefore no

## 15.2

reason to object to this application. I would, however, advise that the materials approved are carefully controlled and that the permitted development rights are restricted to ensure the ethos behind this new dwelling is maintained into the future”.

They state that whilst they have sympathy with the applicants’ reasoning for requesting the change in material, given the sensitive position of the site on the boundary on the conservation area it is difficult to see that the use of the selected materials complies with the above statement or with the following policies - CE-D3 Conserving heritage assets: Conservation Areas Development proposals affecting conservation areas should ensure that:

- a) the character or appearance of the area is preserved or enhanced;
- b) they deliver high quality design and incorporate materials that reflect the scale, architectural quality and detailing of the area.

Policy CE-S6 Design and Sustainable Construction Principles:

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.

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### **Representations**

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At the time of writing this report, 20 letters of representations had been received from third parties. Those that support the proposal (18no) advance the following points which are summarised thus:

- The cladding already erected looks very like the red cedar cladding originally specified, in colour and surface;
- The Cedral cladding is a much better material that will provide improved stability, life and freedom from maintenance;
- It is made from recycled materials, is more sustainable than timber cladding with much better fire resistance;
- Red cedar cladding splits and twists as it matures and requires frequent application of wood preservative and paint to maintain its appearance;
- The ENPA should do all that it can to assist early examples of self-build to encourage others to follow;
- The scheme was always going to be a modern house surrounded by much older properties, whatever cladding material was used; the world has changed so much since the original application was made and as a result the conditions no longer seem reasonable;

## 15.2

- The colour and texture of the material chosen was done with great care by the property owners, through a consultation with neighbours and local registered electoral role residents of Porlock and surrounding areas;
- Question whether Red Cedar has been a traditional, sustainable and locally sourced building material in Exmoor;
- The majority of Western Red Cedar wood used in the UK is imported from North America or south east Asia;
- Most commercial harvesting of Cedar produces wood of a moderately durable standard, giving it a life span of 10-15 years before treatment is required;
- This opens the door to anyone in the National Park, to preserve or paint their timber in whatever colour they desire;
- In support of the Cedral cladding erected, it has further advantages over the Red Cedar, in so much that the material is made from recycled material, it does change its colour in sunlight, it has a grain and is does not look shiny like plastic;
- The cladding has a class A fire resistance and is not open to bug infestation and insect attack, all of which is critical in any habitable buildings of timber frame construction;
- What we have now is a building colour which is consistent and not like Cedar which would weather and bleach in this location, more on the front east and south east corner which has sunlight and not much on the other faces; The result of which would be an appearance of a two tone building;
- The Cedral product is also guaranteed maintenance free and has a life expectancy of at least 50 years;

The 2no letters of objection to the proposal state the following:

- The original planning permission was granted on the basis of Western Red Cedar cladding; a sustainable material which would weather and merge into the environment and surrounding area in keeping with the ethos of ENP;
- What has been applied without permission is a light coloured cement board which will not age or weather and merge into its surroundings;
- An enforcement order was issued, with a year to comply, that year is up and instead of enforcement we have consultation which is puzzling;
- The planning permission clearly stated that samples of the cladding needed ENPA approval before fitting, ENPA would not have approved a sample of the Cedral cladding had they been shown it, on the grounds that it was light in colour, doesn't discolour and therefore never blend in with the surroundings;
- When the original planning permission was granted, safeguards were assured to ensure the use of, not only sustainable and ethically produced materials, but a natural material that over time would age in an aesthetically pleasing manner, essential when set in a highly sensitive local environment. I thus supported the original planning application;

## 15.2

- Concerned that if this particular planning stricture is removed future developers may take advantage of this alteration/ lift condition, as a precedent will be set;
- Finally any applicants in the locale who were placed under the same condition and completed their work accordingly may feel, and with some merit, that the ENP are not taking seriously their own policy in respect of the environment and sustainability.

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### Policy Context

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#### Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031

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

CE-S1 – Landscape and Seascape Character

CE-D3 - Conserving Heritage Assets

CE-D1 – Protecting Exmoor’s Landscapes and Seascapes

CE-S4 – Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment

CE-S6 – Design and Sustainable Construction Principles

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

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### Planning Considerations

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The main issue in this case is the effect of the use of the fibre cement weatherboarding as external wall cladding upon the landscape and scenic beauty of the Exmoor National Park and the setting of the Porlock Conservation Area.

Policy GP1 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 states that sustainable development for Exmoor National Park will conserve and enhance the National Park, its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and its special qualities. ENPLP policies CE-S1 and CE-D1 are concerned with protecting Exmoor’s landscapes and seascapes.

Under ‘Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment’ within section 4 of the Local Plan, the following objectives are set out:

*“Objective 5: To ensure that the built tradition, character, distinctiveness and historic character of Exmoor’s settlements, buildings, farmsteads, landscapes, archaeological sites and monuments are conserved and enhanced and that the cultural heritage of Exmoor is protected through the careful management of development.*

## 15.2

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*Objective 6: To encourage new development to use local materials, sustainable building design and methods, in ways that contribute to the distinctive character and cultural heritage of Exmoor.”*

Policy CE-S4 stipulates that Exmoor National Park’s local distinctiveness, cultural heritage, and historic environment, will be conserved and enhanced to ensure that present and future generations can increase their knowledge, awareness and enjoyment of these special qualities.

In respect of Conservation Areas, Policy CE-D3 states that proposals affecting them should ensure that:

- a) the character or appearance of the area is preserved or enhanced; and
- b) they deliver high quality design and incorporate materials that reflect the scale, architectural quality and detailing of the area.

Amongst other things, the policy states that development proposals affecting a heritage asset and its setting should demonstrate: a positive contribution to the setting through sensitive design and siting; and the avoidance of unacceptable adverse effects and cumulative visual effects that would impact on it.

Furthermore, Policy CE-S6 requires that construction materials complement the local context through the use of traditional and natural sustainable building materials. The use of locally sourced sustainable building materials are encouraged.

The preamble to this policy sets out in paragraph 4.152 that the use of traditional, natural materials is critical in ensuring that the appearance of new developments conserves and enhances the quality and character of the built environment of the National Park. Paragraph 4.157 also explains that timber detailing (windows, doors, weatherboards etc.) when in hardwood or pre-treated, can also be repaired and have a long lifespan.

Clearly the subject building is of recent construction, and therefore modern methods of construction can be entertained in certain circumstances, however it is located in a highly sensitive area in terms of heritage and landscape, within the setting of the Conservation Area, with part of the site’s frontage falling within the designation.

The reasoning behind the use of the fibre cement boarding in lieu of timber is noted, along with the benefits of modern materials as cited by both the applicants and many of the third parties (cost, low maintenance, rot resistant, factory painted, fire resistant cladding board) are understood. Nonetheless, whilst some natural materials may be incorporated within the manufacturing process of the Cedral weatherboard, it is still a manmade product with a far more uniform and artificial appearance than the ‘genuine article’ of timber.

## 15.2

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The change in material of the cladding is considered to have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the host building as a result of the unauthorised works, and to support such a proposal would undermine the ENPA's strategy in seeking to conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Park utilising natural materials wherever possible.

Officers are of the view that the installed cladding is unacceptable as a matter of principle, contrary to Policies CE-S6 and CE-D3 of the Local Plan; and paragraphs 176 and 202 of the NPPF.

Therefore, the cited benefits of the fibre cement weatherboarding are noted, however these matters do not outweigh the harm stemming from the proposal that has been identified.

Consequently, it is recommended that the non-compliance with conditions 2 and 4 of planning permission 6/27/16/102 be refused.

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### **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**

The unauthorised use of the fibre cement weatherboarding is considered to be a retrograde step when compared to the use of red cedar cladding.

Policy CE-S4 sets out that materials and design elements should complement the local context through the use of traditional materials. The Cedar boarding is not considered to be a traditional material and the public benefits stemming from the proposal are given limited weight in this case.

Officers consider that there are no material planning considerations that outweigh the harm that would be caused upon the landscape and scenic beauty of the Exmoor National Park, or the setting of the Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset.

Therefore, having regard to the above it is recommended that planning permission be refused.

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### **Recommendation**

Refuse for the following reason:

Policy CE-S6 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 - 2031 states that development should utilise traditional and natural sustainable construction materials,



## 15.2

whilst Policy CE-D3 as set out therein states that proposals affecting Conservation Areas and their settings should ensure that they incorporate materials that reflect the scale, architectural quality and detailing of the area.

The Cedral fibre cement cladding that the applicants seek to retain is constructed from a material that is neither congruent with traditional weatherboarding found within the National Park and is not deemed natural, therefore failing to reflect the highest quality form and finish expected within such areas.

Its installation has caused material harm to the character and appearance of the setting of the Conservation Area and when taking into account the requirements of Paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the proposal is considered to cause unacceptable harm to the landscape setting of the National Park as well. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies GP1, CE-S1, CE-D1, CE-D3, CE-S4 and CE-S6 of the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

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### **Informatives**

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#### **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.

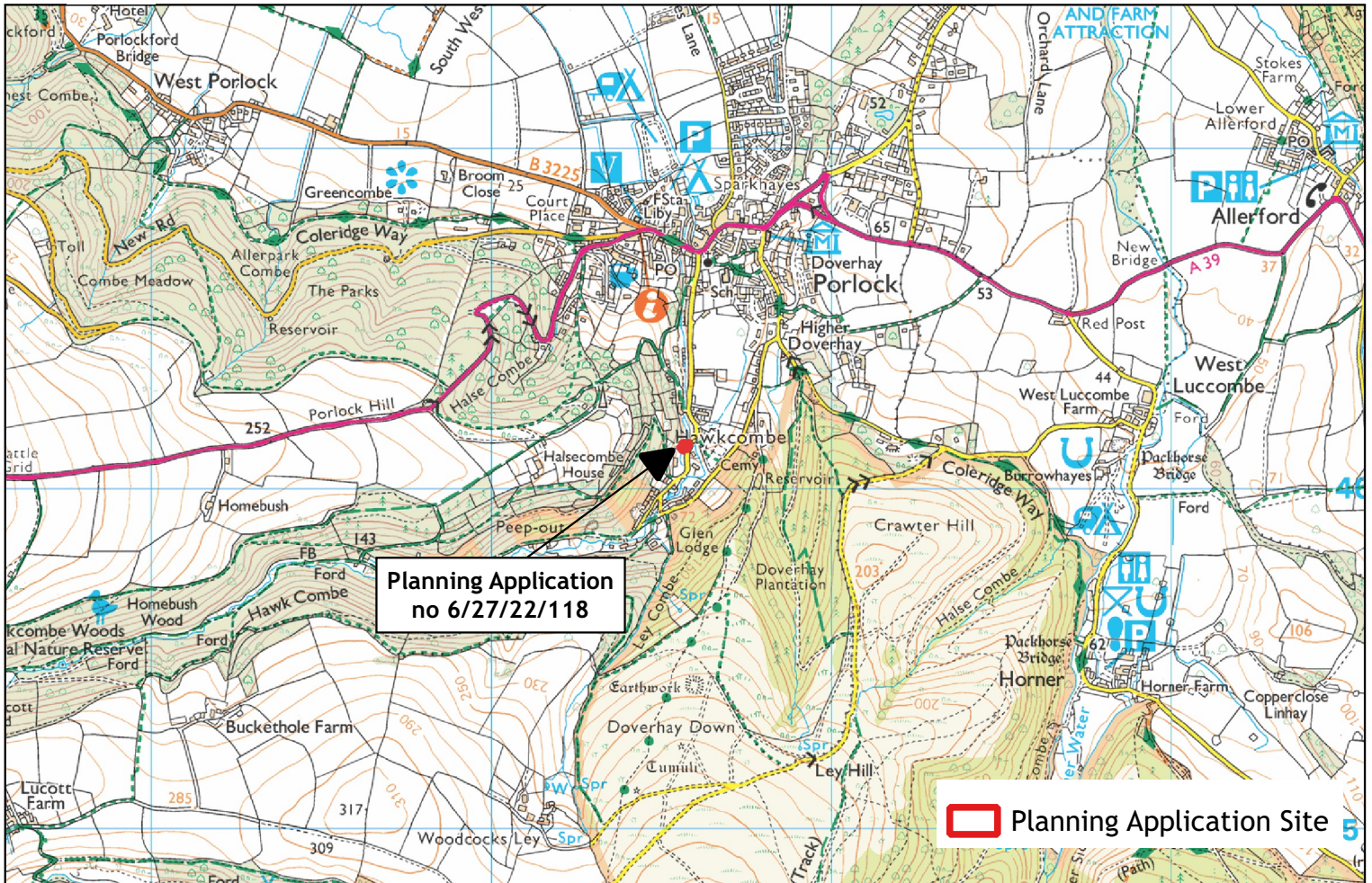
#### **Appeal to the Secretary of State**

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**Site Map**  
**Scale 1:2,500**

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**Overview Map**  
**Scale 1:20,000**

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**15.2**



### Committee Report

Application Number:	6/27/22/112
Registration Date:	20-Jul-2022
Determination Date:	16-Aug-2022
Applicant	Mr R Martin
Agent:	Mr. K Bateman, Bateman Hosegood
Case Officer:	Chris Tivey
Site Address:	THE CULBONE, PORLOCK, MINEHEAD, TA24 8JW
Proposal:	Proposed replacement of 13no. windows and 3no. doors. Retrospective.
Recommendation:	Refuse
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	Oare Parish Meeting have a view that is contrary to the recommendation of Officers and support the proposal

### Relevant History

6/27/00/127 Replacement windows in existing openings on west and south elevations  
Refused 12/05/2000

6/27/20/105 Proposed replacement of 5 no. windows and 1 no. external door  
(Retrospective) Refused 06/04/2020 and dismissed on appeal 16/11/2020

### Site Description & Proposal

The application site consists of a former Public House that is currently closed to the public. It is listed within the Historic Environment Record as: "The building originated as stables for coaching horses on the Minehead-Porlock-Lynmouth run. It became a club after 1946 known as the Culbone Stables Inn". The site is located to the west of Porlock on the A39 between Porlock and County Gate. The site is in an isolated location in the open countryside with one neighbouring property, a dwelling, on the opposite side of the A39.

Planning permission is sought for the replacement of 13no. windows and 3no. external doors and is retrospective in nature. 5no. of the windows and 1no. of the doors, located on the northern and eastern elevations were the subject of a previous planning application which was dismissed at appeal pursuant to Planning Inspectorate reference APP/F9498/W/20/3257315 (see planning history above).

## 15.3

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This application seeks to cover those windows and in addition windows and doors that have been replaced on the rear (southern elevation) of the building.

The applicant explains that the northern elevation of the building lies adjacent to the main A39 running from Porlock to Lynmouth and that due to the camber of the road, surface water lies against the curb adjacent to the building. Passing vehicles running through the water cause extensive splashing of water onto the building and the continued soaking of the elevation, caused the timber constructed windows and doors to rot. They also state that the windows and doors on the rear elevation take a constant battering in the winter months from the weather as it faces the prevailing wind direction and has an open aspect to the large valley landscape.

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### Consultee Representations

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**Oare & Culbone Parish Meeting** – Support the retrospective planning application for the following reasons: • The new windows are of good quality and look entirely appropriate; • Traditional wooden windows would only last 18 months in that location due to the building being constantly sprayed with saline spray from the A39 in winter; To use wooden frames is anachronistic; the quality and appearance of PVC windows has now increased beyond recognition; • To oblige the Lillycombe estate, the only significant employer in the area, to replace those windows again would waste money and time to a business just emerging from the strictures of Covid, and numerous scant natural resources.

**ENPA Historic Buildings Officer** – No response to this application at the time of writing this report, but stated on the previous proposal as follows:

– The pre-amble to Policy CE-S6 (Design and Sustainable Construction Principles) makes clear that timber windows are preferable to uPVC. Counter to the planning statement uPVC windows are not a sustainable solution. Well maintained timber windows will long outlast uPVC windows. There are timber windows on Exmoor that are more than 200 years old, even in exposed locations. Timber windows are also easier to repair, less environmentally harmful to produce and elements can be recycled unlike upvc which generally end up in landfill. I do not agree that the upvc windows will compliment to character of form of this late 19th/early 20th century building which is identified on the historic environment record (sic).

**Somerset County Council - Highway Authority** – Following on from the previous application, 6/27/20/105, it is noted as part of this latest application that the red line has been amended in line with the road record. On the basis that none of the doors or windows at ground floor level open onto/over the adjoining public highway, there are no observations to make.

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### Representations

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No representations received from any third parties.

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### Policy Context

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#### **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-S4 – Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment

CE-S6 – Design and Sustainable Construction Principles

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

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### Planning Considerations

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The main issue in this case is the effect of the design and materials of the proposed windows and doors upon the landscape and scenic beauty of the Exmoor National Park.

Policy GP1 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 states that sustainable development for Exmoor National Park will conserve and enhance the National Park, its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and its special qualities. ENPLP policies CE-S1 and CE-D1 are concerned with protecting Exmoor’s landscapes and seascapes.

Under ‘Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment’ within section 4 of the Local Plan, the following objectives are set out:

*“Objective 5: To ensure that the built tradition, character, distinctiveness and historic character of Exmoor’s settlements, buildings, farmsteads, landscapes, archaeological sites and monuments are conserved and enhanced and that the cultural heritage of Exmoor is protected through the careful management of development.”*

*Objective 6: To encourage new development to use local materials, sustainable building design and methods, in ways that contribute to the distinctive character and cultural heritage of Exmoor.”*

Policy CE-S4 stipulates that Exmoor National Park’s local distinctiveness, cultural heritage, and historic environment, will be conserved and enhanced to ensure that

## 15.3

present and future generations can increase their knowledge, awareness and enjoyment of these special qualities.

Policy CE-S6 requires that construction materials complement the local context through the use of traditional and natural sustainable building materials. The use of locally sourced sustainable building materials are encouraged.

The preamble to the policy sets out that uPVC windows can have much thicker, unmoulded frames than timber, and the designs and detailing are for the most part limited in terms of being effective replacements for traditional timber designs. The Local Plan is clear that the National Park Authority wishes to see the use of timber for window frames as the primary approach to fenestration. It is also states that alternative materials should only be considered in certain circumstances for non-traditional buildings in areas outside conservation areas.

The subject building is not present on the Tithe mapping, but it is on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map from the late 19th Century. As such, the building is likely to be approximately 150 years old and is identified on the Authority's Historic Environment Record (HER).

Traditional buildings are defined in the Local Plan as mostly older buildings of solid wall construction built of natural and often local materials (e.g. stone, cob, brick, lime mortar and render). On Exmoor, these usually predate World War II. Given this, The Culbone is considered to be a traditional building and it therefore follows that the certain circumstances for alternative materials set out in the preamble to Policy CE-S6 cannot be considered to apply in this particular case.

In addition to the 5no. windows and 1no. door that were previously replaced, and the subject of the dismissed appeal, the applicant has installed a further 8no. windows and 2no. doors without planning permission. These have been painted a muted fawn/green shade.

It was and continues to be the view of Officers that the new windows and door do not match the overall detailing and finish of the previous windows and doors. The uPVC units have chunkier, unmoulded casements and the glazing bars lack the detailing and form of the traditional timber units that they have replaced. The new windows do not replicate the painted finish of the timber units, with the absence of the patina that wood grain creates. The design and form of the windows and doors do not have a character and appearance that complements the building and are not of the highest quality, as required by Paragraph 4.158 of the Local Plan.

The change in material, design and profile of the replacement windows and doors are considered to have an unacceptable, and materially detrimental impact upon the

## 15.3

character and appearance of the host building as a result of the unauthorised works. Officers consider that it would be appropriate and proportionate to return timber units to the building. Particularly as the principle of an alternative window and door material in this building is not considered to be achievable under the Local Plan.

In their decision, the Inspector appointed to determine the previous appeal stated:

*“7. The uPVC windows and door have a similar design and style to the building’s other timber fenestration and the previous timber versions that they replaced. Painted green, they also respect the colour of the building’s timber fenestration. However, the replacements do not reflect the form and finish of the previous fenestration nor the building’s other timber fenestration. Their wider frames, glazing bars and larger non-flush casements are conspicuously chunkier and lack the detailing and slim form of the timber fenestration.*

*8. As shown in the submitted images, the uPVC windows and door therefore read as poorer quality. While painting may have made their profiles appear slimmer than when they were unpainted, their painted state does not prevent them from being of noticeably lesser quality and of a non-natural form. Accordingly, the uPVC replacements, although only replacing some of the building’s many windows, detract from the character and appearance of the traditional building and the surrounding area, and harm the site’s setting within the wider Exmoor landscape and the cultural heritage of the National Park. In coming to this view, I have taken account of the condition of the previous timber windows that have been replaced.*

*9. I recognise the surrounding woodlands and other soft landscaping screen the site to some extent. Many of the views of the replacement windows and door would also likely be fleeting as vehicles pass the site on the unrestricted highway which contains no footways or streetlights, and the replacement uPVC door does not serve the building’s main entrance. However, positioned on a bend on the A39, the building is situated in a prominent position and is visible for some distance on the busy main road in both directions. I observed on my site visit that the uPVC replacements can also be seen from the junction and the lower section of the minor road which includes a national cycle route, while the uPVC window in the southern gable end of the building is visible from the adjoining bridleway. Furthermore, some of the replacements can be seen in the same view as the building’s other timber fenestration when approaching the site on the A39 from the north-west. This allows the differences between the uPVC replacements and the remaining higher-quality timber fenestration to be compared in the same view.”*

In the absence of any material change in circumstances, Officers remain of the view that the proposed uPVC windows and doors are unacceptable as a matter of principle, contrary to Policy CE-S6 of the Local Plan; and paragraph 176 of the National Planning



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Policy Framework which affords great weight to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks.

The applicant's cited benefits of uPVC as a material, namely with regard to energy efficiency, security, longevity and socio-economic factors are noted, however these matters do not outweigh the harm stemming from the proposal that has been identified.

As recognised by the previous Inspector in relation to such matters in their planning balance:

*"13. It has been put to me that the site's proximity to the A39 creates an unusual and problematic set of circumstances, with timber windows degrading quickly due to vehicles splashing water, salt, grit and pollutants. The appellant's appeal statement sets out that the previous timber windows were in a poor state of repair and that efforts have been made to ensure that the more hard-wearing uPVC windows – produced in the local area and fitted by a local company – are waterproof and are able to resist the constant damage caused by the proximity of the A39. Given the road camber and the lack of highway drainage, it is said that water pools at the side of the highway, next to the building, and that this results in regular inundation. As a result, the timber windows in this wet and polluted situation need regular repainting and protection works – which requires the closure of one lane of the A39 – to ensure their longevity and prevent them from rotting. It is asserted that the use of timber is therefore neither sustainable nor viable.*

*14. I accept that timber is likely to be less hard wearing than a material such as uPVC. However, I have little substantive evidence which indicates that the paintwork on the uPVC windows would require any less maintenance than painted timber. It seems to me that well-maintained paintwork would also help to ensure the longevity of timber fenestration. Accordingly, and given that the building is, in any event, also said to require regular works to protect its fabric due to its proximity to the A39, I place limited weight on the purported benefits relating to the maintenance and upkeep of the uPVC windows and doors compared to timber fenestration.*

*15. Water and pollutants are no doubt splashed on the building given its proximity to the A39, water may pool beside the building at times, and I observed on my site visit that the camber of the A39 means that it slopes towards the uPVC fenestration on the building's north-eastern elevation. However, I also noted that the site is situated on a slight rise where the highway bends. Due to the prevailing topography, and despite the lack of highway drainage, surface water is therefore likely to generally flow down and away from the building. It seems to me that the site's circumstances are therefore not necessarily so markedly different to other buildings located in close proximity to roads to justify a departure from the development plan in this case. Given the nature and scale of*

## 15.3

*the development, I am satisfied that the benefits would also be limited and would not outweigh the harm I have identified.”*

Consequently it is recommended that planning permission be refused.

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### Human Rights

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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

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The unauthorised uPVC windows and doors are considered to be a retrograde step when considering that they have replaced timber windows and doors that in the main had a traditional form and finish, being of a higher visual quality than the new uPVC units.

Policy CE-S4 sets out that materials and design elements should complement the local context through the use of traditional materials. uPVC is not considered to be a traditional material and the applicant’s submission that timber windows are in a location that would mean that they would deteriorate quickly, together with that the visual appearance of the uPVC units complement the existing building, are given limited weight in this case.

Officers consider that there are no material planning considerations that would outweigh the harm that would be caused upon the landscape and scenic beauty of the Exmoor National Park.

Therefore, having regard to the above, including all matters raised by the applicant, as well as the previous Inspector’s appeal decision, it is recommended that planning permission be refused.

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### Recommendation

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Refused for the following reason:

1. The application seeks retrospective planning permission for 13no. windows and 3no. doors in a public house within Exmoor National Park, following the dismissal of an appeal for some of them in 2020. The subject building is present on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey maps from the 19th Century and is listed within the Historic Environment Record.

Policy CE-S6 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 - 2031 states that development should utilise traditional and natural sustainable construction materials. The windows and doors that the applicant seeks to retain are constructed from a

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material that is neither congruent with the traditional construction material of windows and doors within the National Park and is not deemed natural or sustainable; failing to reflect the form and finish of the original traditional timber windows and doors that were found within the building. Their installation has caused material harm to the character and appearance of the traditional host building and when taking into account the requirements of Paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the proposal is considered to cause unacceptable harm to the landscape setting of the National Park. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies GP1, CE-S1, CE-D1, CE-S4 and CE-S6 of the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

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### **Informatives**

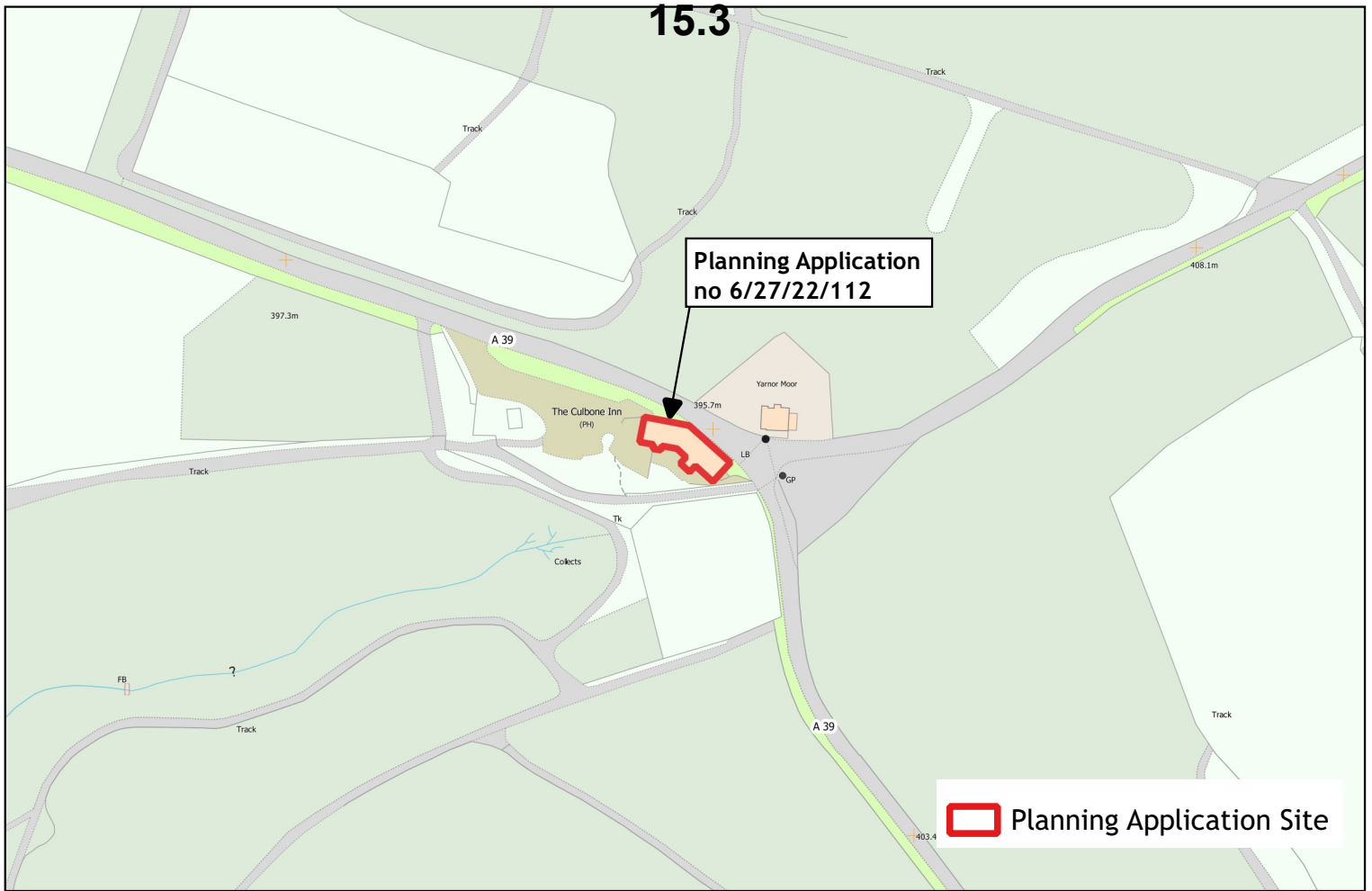
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#### Positive and Proactive Statement

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.

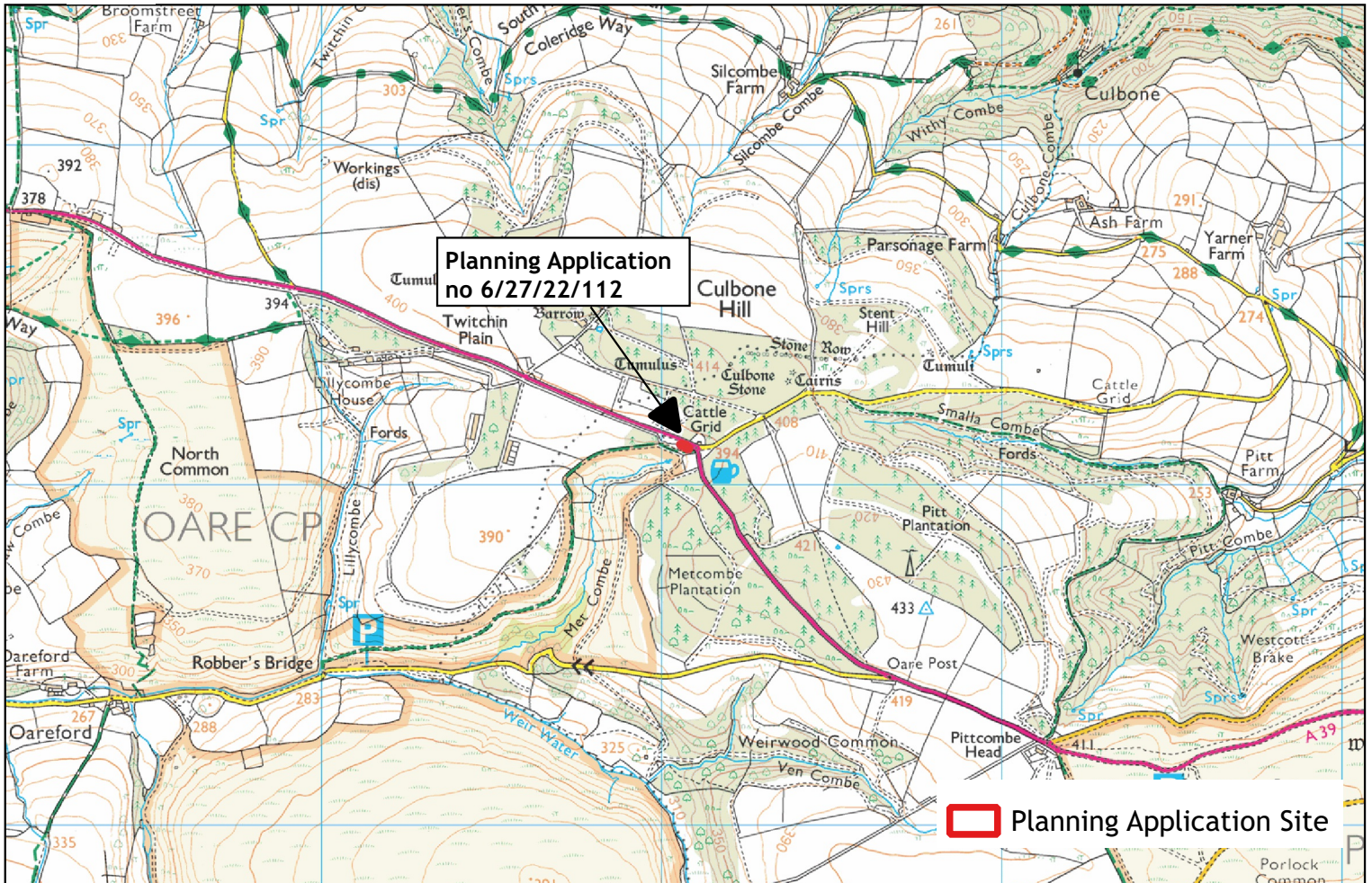
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**15.3**

# 15.4



## Committee Report

Application Number:	6/13/22/107
Registration Date:	19-Aug-2022
Determination Date:	14-Oct-2022
Applicant	Miss C Winfield
Agent:	Mr. A Elston, Architectural Studio
Case Officer:	Yvonne Dale
Site Address:	Exford Woodland Nursey, Exford, TA24 7PP
Proposal:	Application Under Regulation 3 of The Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for the proposed erection of potting shed, covered store, ground mounted solar panels, planting beds and associated works.
Recommendation:	Approve with conditions
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	This application comes before the Authority Committee, in accordance with the adopted scheme of delegation as it is an application submitted by the National Park Authority for development on its own land.

### Relevant History

**36006/A** - Proposed use of land for car park / picnic area and erection of a depot for Exmoor National Park Outside Staff, Auction Field, Exford, Minehead, Somerset  
Approved 15/06/1972

**6/13/76/004** - Proposed erection of depot building with storage enclosure at the Auction Field, Exford, as described in the plans and drawings submitted, as amended by plans received on 1 November 1976, The Auction Field, Exford, Somerset.  
Approved 15/11/1976

**6/13/78/013** - Proposed sawmill at Auction Field, Exford, as described in the plans and drawings submitted  
Withdrawn 02/10/1978

**6/13/81/016** - Proposed use of land adjoining Exford Depot, Exford, for the storage of machinery.  
Approved 13/10/1981

**6/13/96/111** - Proposed equestrian centre comprising of an indoor riding arena (60m x 25m), an outdoor arena (40m x 20m) and car/lorry parking, The Auction Field Exford

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Refused 01/04/1997

**6/13/97/105** - Proposed indoor riding arena (with possible use for other sports), viewing, storage, WC facilities, outdoor arena with all-weather surface, car and lorry parking (Amended Description), The Auction Field, Exford, Refused 05/08/1997

**6/13/97/106** - Picnic and amenity area for the village of Exford and visitors, The Auction Field, Exford, Minehead Refused 05/08/1997

**6/13/15/113** - Application under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for proposed alterations to surface water drainage and installation of oil interceptor, Exford Depot, Exford. Approved 02/02/2016

**6/13/19/104** - Application under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for proposed replacement log shed & extension to create timber store, Exmoor National Park Workshop, Auction Fields, Exford. Approved 04/04/2019

**6/13/20/101** - Application under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for non-material amendment to application reference 6/13/19/104 to rotate shed through 180 degrees, Exmoor National Park Field Services Depot, Exford. Approved 12/03/2020

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### Site Description & Proposal

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Planning permission is sought for the proposed erection of potting shed, covered store, ground mounted solar panels, planting beds and associated works.

The application site lies to the south east of the Exmoor National Park depot, which is situated on the edge of Exford. The Depot site consists of a main building with a larger storage building and smaller ancillary buildings within the yard. The sewage works lie to the south of the site.

The proposed application site is a field primarily laid to grass and surrounded with post and wire fencing and hedges. The land slopes to the northeast with a tree row to the top of the bank.

The site is accessed through a public car park to the west and there is dedicated parking for the depot in front of the main building. To the south west of the site is an existing gateway into the field and the proposal includes the provision of a new entrance track from that gateway to the existing fenced off area to the north.

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Part of the site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3, in particular the proposed new entrance track but the majority of the site lies within flood zone 1.

A public footpath runs in an east west orientation and lies to the south of the site, a public footpath, also in part follows the proposed entrance track.

This application comes before the Authority Committee as it is an application submitted by the National Park Authority for development on its own land.

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### Consultee Representations

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#### Natural England – 07/10/22 – No Objection

**ENPA - Wildlife Conservation Officer 08/09/22** - Thank you for consulting me on this application for the proposed erection of a potting shed, covered store, ground mounted solar panels, planting beds and associated works at the Exford Woodland Nursery.

The site is around 0.2ha in size and from the photographs provided alongside aerial photographs, the site appears to comprise an area of (possibly tussocky) grassland, scrub, and is bounded by a mature hedgerow on the northern boundary. Whilst the proposals are for the creation of a nursery for trees to support nature recovery on Exmoor, which I fully support, an assessment is required of the current status of the site. As such, please request an ecology survey is completed to support this application.

I am glad to see the inclusion of native hedgerow planting around the south-eastern boundaries of the site and planting of scattered trees within the site. However, for further enhancements, I suggest that at least two bird boxes (e.g. sparrow terraces) should be installed on the north-east elevation of the potting shed and at least two bat boxes should be installed as high as possible on the south-west elevation of the potting shed. I wonder if there might be an opportunity to include an owl box on site too.

I note that no external lighting is proposed, and I suggest this is secured by way of appropriate conditions.

The site lies within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of nearby SSSIs. Guidance suggests consultation with Natural England for all applications (except householder) extending outside existing settlements affecting greenspace. I therefore think this is required in this instance.

**ENPA - Wildlife Conservation Officer - 17/10/22** - Thank you for consulting me on this application for the proposed erection of a potting shed, covered store, ground mounted solar panels, planting beds and associated works at the Exford Woodland Nursery. As you know, I initially commented on 8 September 2022, when I requested



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an ecology survey was completed due to the size and nature of the site. Following this, I was asked to do the survey by ENPA and I undertook this on 12 October 2022. In principle, I have no objections to the development from an ecological perspective, I think that risks to protected species are low and mitigatable and there are opportunities for enhancement on site. I am preparing a report and will send this to you on or by 27 October 2022, as requested.

**ENPA - Future Landscapes Officer – 13/10/22** - The proposed potting shed and store are located next to the existing Exmoor National Park depot, which has several outbuildings and a yard, which is used for outdoor storage and a sawmill. The potting shed and store would be in a narrow strip of ground between the yard and a steep bank would not extend beyond the southern limit of the depot boundary. The wider enclosed area for the nursery is an L-shape wrapping around the southern end of the depot, its boundary aligning with the depot boundary to the west.

The nursery lies in an area identified as important visual amenity space in policy HC-D20, which states that any development should not harm the visual amenity. The amenity space identified extends across the whole field to the south-east.

The enclosure is not visible from public areas, apart from the amenity space itself and the footpath running through it. The low-lying position of the site and trees on the field boundary on the top of the bank mean that only glimpsed views are likely from residential properties on higher ground to the north. A hedgerow planted around the enclosure and the trees proposed to be planted within the site will contain it visually and give some screening from the amenity space. Additional tree planting within the site, where shading is less of an issue for growing such as on the boundary with the depot, may contribute further.

The potting shed is designed as a rustic, low level open-fronted timber structure. Apart from this and the small, covered store, the enclosure will not contain any permanent built form, only trestles for pot grown trees, beds for open grown trees, a small number of solar console tubs at ground level and water collection tanks which would be screened by a timber fence. It is a low-key development that would provide future stock to contribute to the supply of locally sourced trees for local planting schemes.

With its location next to the existing depot and taking up a small area in the corner of the field, the development would not hinder the use or landscape value of the visual amenity value of the open space and would not cause additional harm to the setting of the village.

**ENPA - ROW and Access Officer – 29/09/22** - Public footpath DU4/6 runs through the application site and coincides in part with the entrance track to the new tree nursery.

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I am fully supportive of the development of the tree nursery but would like to make sure that the public use of the footpath is properly taken into account as it is not indicated on the plans or mentioned in the application. Public footpath DU4/6 is a popular route with both locals and visitors and in the past few years, has become an easy access route which is used regularly by trampers/mobility scooters since kissing gates were removed by ENPA and replaced with hunting gates. Further works are planned to improve the path surface.

The plans show the access route to the tree nursery coinciding with the public footpath for around 45 metres and the plans also indicate that 'scalpings' will be added to the track, turning area and entrance. Whilst there is already some aggregate in the gate entrance, if scalpings are to be laid for the whole 45 metre length then this will require authorisation by us as agents for the Highway Authority as this constitutes a change in surface. This is a separate process to the planning application. Overall the surfacing of this section of track is beneficial to users of the public right of way providing the surface is suitable for mobility scooters. I also would like to see careful consideration given to the point where the public footpath would come off the new track so that this is easy for the public to use ie. there is no lip or edge and the footpath is as easy to use as before for those on foot and on mobility scooters.

Although traffic will be mixing with the public on foot along this stretch of the track, I am assured that there will only be occasional use of the track by vehicles once the development phase is over and also that there will still be vehicular access via the depot. Additionally, where the track starts and comes into the field (at the depot end) there is a separate gate for pedestrians which avoids any issues at this pinch point. I therefore am reassured as far as traffic mixing with the public on foot is concerned.

I and/or the Area Ranger Richard Eales would be very happy to meet on site to discuss/agree the surfacing works in relation to the public footpath. During development works, it is important that the public right of way remains open at all times and is easy and safe to use. Please see below for our standard advice on development in the vicinity of public rights of way.

**SCC - Highways Authority - 26/08/2022 – Standing Advice Applies**

**Exford Parish Council – 06/09/22** - All councilors who attended the meeting supported this proposal. Councilors were very supportive of the focus on education and liked the idea that the site would be accessible. Councilors were surprised that no security measures had been thought about and mentioned a security camera.

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### **Representations**

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No public letters of representation have been received.

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## Policy Context

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

GP1 – General Policy

CC-S1 – Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

CC-D1 – Flood Risk

CC-S5 – Low Carbon and Renewable Energy 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

HC-D20 – Important Visual Amenity Space

CE-S6 - Design & Sustainable Construction Principles

RT-D12 – Access Land and Rights of Way

SE-S1 – A Sustainable Exmoor Economy

SE-S2 – Business Development in settlements

SE-S4 – Agricultural and forestry development

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

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## Planning Considerations

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The main material planning considerations in this case are considered to be the principle of development, the design, scale and materials, the impact on the character and appearance of the landscape, the impact on protected species and habitats, the impact on flood risk, the impact on the public rights of way and the impact on neighbouring amenity.

### Principle of Development

Section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that “agriculture” includes horticulture, fruit growing, seed growing, dairy farming, the breeding and keeping of livestock (including any creature kept for the production of food, wool, skins or fur, or for the purpose of its use in the farming of land), the use of land as grazing land, meadow land, osier land, market gardens and nursery grounds, and the use of land for woodlands where that use is ancillary to the farming of land for other agricultural purposes, and “agricultural” shall be construed accordingly.

The growing of ornamental trees, shrubs, plants and flowers is normally taken to fall within the above definition of agriculture. The agent has indicated that proposed nursery will act as a source of trees for Authority projects and as a community hub for learning about growing trees (from collecting and germinating seeds to potting and planting seedlings). Based on the information submitted it appears that the proposed use of the land, as a tree nursery, would fall into the definition of agriculture as defined under Section 336(1).

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Policy SE-S4 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (including minerals and waste policies) (the Local Plan) permits in principle proposals for new or replacement buildings, tracks and structures or extensions required for agriculture or forestry purposes.

Policy SE-S4 states permission will be granted for new buildings, tracks and structures or extensions required for agricultural or forestry purposes where:

- a) it can be demonstrated that there is a functional need and its size and scale are commensurate with that need;
- b) the structure is designed for the purposes of agriculture;
- c) in the case of new buildings, the site is related physically and functionally to existing buildings associated with the business;
- d) structures are sited appropriately and of an appropriate design;
- e) proposals do not generate a level of activity or otherwise detrimentally affect the amenity of surrounding properties and occupiers;
- f) appropriate measures are taken to ensure that proposals do not have an adverse impact on biodiversity or cultural heritage or cause other environmental impacts; and
- g) it can be demonstrated that opportunities have been taken to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and minimise surface water run-off.

The agent has indicated that the proposed buildings and associated works are required to provide space for safe storage of tools and materials used in conjunction with the nursery and to provide shelter and space for volunteers carrying out nursery related work.

The proposed development seeks to erect a new potting shed, covered store, ground mounted solar panels, planting beds and an entrance track.

The proposed potting shed and store is single storey and will be constructed of horizontal, waney edge timber cladding under a dark painted galvanized metal sheet, mono-pitched roof. The storeroom lies to the north western end of the building and to south eastern end is a timber screen, shielding the siting of 4 roof fed Intermediate Bulk Containers (IBCs) to harvest and store rainwater sat on timber frames. The proposed building will measure approximately 15m x 5m with an eaves height of 3m at its highest point and 2.3m where the roof slopes down. The proposed building has four open-fronted bays from the south east elevation back towards the north west elevation.

The proposal also includes a 3 bay open fronted, single storey storage building. The storage building will be constructed of timber sleepers set between a dark painted steel frame structure with a dark painted galvanized corrugated sheet mono-pitched roof. The proposed building will measure approximately 6.6m x 3.3m with an eaves height of 2.4m at its highest point and 2.2m where the roof slopes down.

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The proposal also seeks to install 8 ground mounted solar panels, in two rows of four panels. Each panel will measure 1m x 1.6m which would achieve a solar system with an output on 2kw. The panels will be set into the rising ground level in a terraced position.

The proposal also includes the provision of 19 raised beds. Split into two groups (one with 12 beds and one with 7 beds). Each bed will measure approximately 0.9m x 5m with a height of 0.45m. the 12 bed group is set into the bank and is terraced with a 1m access path between each of the three rows. Adjacent to the group of 7 raised beds, 7 open ground beds with timber edging, similar in dimensions are also proposed.

The proposed works also include the provision of an entrance track and turning area. The proposed plan indicates that these will be constructed of free draining scalplings.

The proposed development is located adjacent to the existing buildings within the depot yard owned and run by the Exmoor National Park Authority. The proposed site is well related physically and functionally. The proposed buildings will run in an east-west orientation.

There are residential properties located to the north west of the proposed site. The landownership plan submitted with the application indicates that these are not owned by the applicant. It is considered that the proposal would not generate a level of activity or otherwise detrimentally affect the amenity of surrounding properties. The proposed development has been designed to match the existing vernacular to minimise the impact on visual amenity, biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The proposed development incorporates measures for the integration of appropriate renewable energy in the form solar panels and rainwater harvesting to help reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency.

The development consists of the erection of agricultural buildings and structures which are required for agricultural purposes, as such; it is considered that it is acceptable in principle subject to other material planning interests being satisfied.

### **Design, Scale and Materials and the impact on Landscape Character and Appearance**

The development consists of the proposed erection of potting shed, covered store, ground mounted solar panels, planting beds and associated works.

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 proposed development uses waney edge timber cladding, timber sleepers, dark painted metal sheets and framing. It is considered that the proposed materials are acceptable and comply with policy CE-S6.

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It is considered that the scale, design and materials of the proposed development are acceptable in this instance.

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. The site lies within an area designated as important visual amenity space.

Policy HC-D20 of the local plan relates to important visual amenity space and states that development proposals will not be permitted where they cause harm or detriment to the visual amenity value of those areas of important visual amenity space and their relationship to settlement character, the surrounding landscape or the cultural/historic traditions of individual settlements.

This authority's Future Landscapes Officer has commented on the application and states " With its location next to the existing depot and taking up a small area in the corner of the field, the development would not hinder the use or landscape value of the visual amenity value of the open space and would not cause additional harm to the setting of the village".

Natural England have commented on the application and state that they have no objection.

The proposed building will be sited within an agricultural field and is well related physically and functionally to the adjacent existing buildings. The development will be visible from nearby rights of way.

The topography of the site is gently rising towards the north east of the site with a bank along the northern boundary. The existing building on site is also set and not cut into the existing level site. The hedgebank and existing building will largely screen the proposed building from public view from the road.

Paragraph 152 of the NPPF states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and should support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

Paragraph 158 of the NPPF states that when determining applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should: a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution and b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

Policy CC-S1 (Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation) of the Local Plan provides that climate change mitigation measures will be encouraged through promoting the

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energy hierarchy through: first reducing the need for energy; then using energy efficiently; and using small scale low carbon and renewable energy. This application seeks to install solar pv panels and will help contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation and therefore accords with Policy CC-S1.

In accordance with policy CC-S5 (Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Development) the National Park Authority is supportive in principle of development proposals for small scale renewable energy schemes that assist in contributing towards meeting domestic, community or business energy needs within the National Park. Solar pv panels are considered a sustainable, renewable form of energy that can assist in meeting the community energy needs of The Nursery and therefore accords with Policy CC-S5.

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. The development site lies within the Dark Sky (1km) Reserve Critical Buffer Zone. Clause 2(b) of CE-S2 states that external lighting within the Dark Sky Reserve Critical Buffer Zone is strictly controlled. The proposed development does not include any further external lighting and a condition will be added to any approval that requires any external lighting to be agreed by the Authority and it is considered that the development complies with policy CE-S2 of the Local Plan.

The proposed building lies in close proximity to existing buildings and will be accessed via an existing gateway with a new entrance track proposed. The proposed development would be visible from nearby public rights of way but would be seen in context with its surroundings, other existing development and the wider landscape and is sited adjacent to the existing built form with mature screening to minimise its visual impact. In this context, the proposal, is considered to have an acceptable impact on the landscape and complies with policies CE-S1, CE-D1 and HC-D20 of the Local Plan.

### **Impact on Protected Species and Habitat**

Policy CE-S3 of the Local Plan relates to biodiversity and green infrastructure and states that the conservation and enhancement of wildlife, habitats and sites of geological interest within the National Park will be given great weight.

The proposed development to erect a new agricultural building includes the proposed erection of potting shed, covered store, ground mounted solar panels, planting beds and associated works.

This Authority's Wildlife Conservation Officer has commented on the application and states "Whilst the proposals are for the creation of a nursery for trees to support nature recovery on Exmoor, which I fully support, an assessment is required of the current status of the site. As such, please request an ecology survey is completed to support this application."

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The Authority's ecologist further comments that the inclusion of native hedgerow planting around the south-eastern boundaries of the site and planting of scattered trees within the site are positive. However, further enhancements, are suggested that at least two bird boxes (e.g. sparrow terraces) should be installed on the north-east elevation of the potting shed and at least two bat boxes should be installed as high as possible on the south-west elevation of the potting shed as well as potentially providing an owl box on site too.

This Authority's Wildlife Conservation Officer has visited the site to undertake an ecological appraisal and has made the following comments *"As you know, I initially commented on 8 September 2022, when I requested an ecology survey was completed due to the size and nature of the site. Following this, I was asked to do the survey by ENPA and I undertook this on 12 October 2022. In principle, I have no objections to the development from an ecological perspective, I think that risks to protected species are low and mitigatable and there are opportunities for enhancement on site. I am preparing a report and will send this to you on or by 27 October 2022, as requested"*.

On this basis, it is considered that the risk of adverse harm to protected species and habitats is low and mitigation and enhancement measures can be added to provide net gain at the proposed site. It is considered, in this instance, that whilst those mitigation and/or enhancement measures are not conditioned at the time of writing this report they will be updated to Members at the Authority meeting.

It is considered that enhancement measures with the aim of providing a net biodiversity gain, contributing to the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and local policy could be conditioned to any grant of planning permission and the proposal would, therefore, comply with policy CE-S3 of the Local Plan and statutory legislation.

### **Impact on public rights of way**

Policy RT-D12 of the Local Plan states that the access network will be safeguarded by ensuring that development proposals will not adversely affect a) the condition of the access network, b) users' interests and c) character and appearance.

A Public Right of Way DU 4/6 (Footpath) runs along the southern boundary of the site and forms the access lane to enter the site.

This Authority's Public Right of Way and Access Officer (PROW) has commented on the application and supports the development but seeks to ensure that the public use of the footpath is properly taken into account as it is not indicated on the plans or mentioned in the application.



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The PROW officer states that the Public footpath DU4/6 is a popular route and in recent years, has become an easy access route which is used regularly by trampers/mobility scooters since kissing gates were removed by ENPA and replaced with hunting gates.

The plans show the access route to the tree nursery coinciding with the public footpath for around 45 metres and the plans also indicate that 'scalpings' will be added to the track, turning area and entrance. Whilst there is already some aggregate in the gate entrance, if scalpings are to be laid for the whole 45 metre length then this will require authorisation as this constitutes a change in surface. Overall, the PROW officer considered that the surface of this section of track would be beneficial to users of the public right of way providing the surface is suitable for mobility scooters.

Although traffic will be mixing with the public on foot along this stretch of the track, the PROW officer is content that there will only be occasional use of the track by vehicles once the development phase is over and also that there will still be vehicular access via the depot.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development would not adversely affect the public right of way either through its condition, its users' interests or affect its character and appearance. It is considered that the proposed development accords with policy RT-D12 of the Local Plan.

### **Impact on neighbouring amenity**

Policy GP1 of the Local Plan states that opportunities must be taken to contribute to the sustainable development of the area and particular attention will be paid to the impact on the amenities of local residents or occupiers of neighbouring properties. Policy CE-S6 states that development should not detrimentally affect the amenities of surrounding properties and occupiers including overlooking, loss of daylight, overbearing appearance, or other adverse environmental impacts.

The nearest properties to the site are No's 1 and 2 Auction Fields. The garden of No 1 lies approximately 65m to the north west of the site.

No public letters of representation have been received.

It is considered that there would not be an unacceptable increase in overlooking. It is also considered that the works would cause no adverse effect on the neighbouring occupiers from overbearing, loss of light or other adverse environmental impacts, therefore, it is judged that the development would have an acceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents, in accordance with policies GP1 and CE-S6 of the Local Plan.

### **Other matters**

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SCC Highways have commented on the application and state that their standing advice applies. However, the proposal does not seek to add additional parking or alter an existing access onto a public highway.

Exford Parish Council supported the application.

### **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 152 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 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 but it is noted that proposed building would utilise sustainable cladding material in the form of natural timber and is a second-hand building. It is considered that there would not be a material impact on the climate going forward and Officers have also noted that its construction would assist with the ongoing management and conservation of the protected landscape. Officers consider that the impact on the climate resulting from the construction of the proposed development would not be such that a reason for refusal should be given.

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### **Human Rights**

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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

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It is considered that the building is required for agricultural purposes and is commensurate with that need. The design and materials are in keeping with other typical modern agricultural buildings on Exmoor.

It is also considered that the building has an acceptable impact, particularly when viewed in context with the surrounding, existing landscaping and buildings and has an acceptable impact on wider designated sites. It is also considered that the impact on protected species and habitats and public rights of way is acceptable. For the reasons outlined above the proposed development is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the relevant development plan policies. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to appropriate conditions.

### Recommendation

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Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, (as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out strictly in accordance with drawings numbered 2479/200B – Proposed Site Layout Plan, 2479/201B – Proposed Potting Shed and 2479/202B – Proposed store, planters and solar panels and date stamped by the Local Planning Authority on 19th August 2022.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the works accord with the approved details.

3. The roofs, on the buildings, hereby permitted, shall be painted anthracite grey in colour unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the visual amenity and landscape character of the National Park in accordance with Policies GP1, CE-S1, CE-D1, CE-S6 and CE-S2 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031.

4. Potential net gain condition

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5. The buildings hereby permitted shall be used only for agricultural purposes as defined in Section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Reason: To protect the character and amenities of this rural area where there is a policy of restraint.

6. The agricultural buildings hereby permitted shall be removed from the site and the Land reinstated to its former condition within three months, if within 10 years of substantial completion the building becomes redundant to agricultural use and the Local Planning Authority have not previously granted planning permission for an alternative use. Within one month of the substantial completion of the building the applicant shall notify the Local Planning Authority in writing of the date of substantial completion.

Reason: To achieve environmental and visual enhancement of this rural part of the National Park in the absence of an agricultural justification for the building in accordance with Policies GP1, CE-D1 and SE-S4 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031.

7. The foul drainage shall be kept separate from clean surface and roof water.

Reason: To help prevent pollution of the water environment in accordance with policies GP1, CE-S1, CE-D1, CE-S3, CE-S6, CC-S6, CC-D5, CC-S7, CE-S4 and CE-D3 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031.

8. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting those Orders with or without modification), no additional lighting shall be attached to the development hereby approved without the prior written agreement of the Local Planning Authority. Any approved lighting shall then be installed and operated in accordance with an agreed lighting scheme.

Reason: To safeguard the visual amenity, landscape character and dark night sky of the National Park in accordance with Policies GP1, CE-S1, CE-D1, CE-S6 and CE-S2 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031.

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### **Informatives**

#### **Conditions and Informatives**

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

## 15.4

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. It will be necessary to adopt a formal approach and that if changes to approved plans are proposed then it will be necessary to make a new planning application. Please ensure that works comply with the approved plans so as to avoid the possibility that works are unauthorised and liable for enforcement action.

### **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](mailto:plan@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk).

### **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.

### **Public Rights of Way**

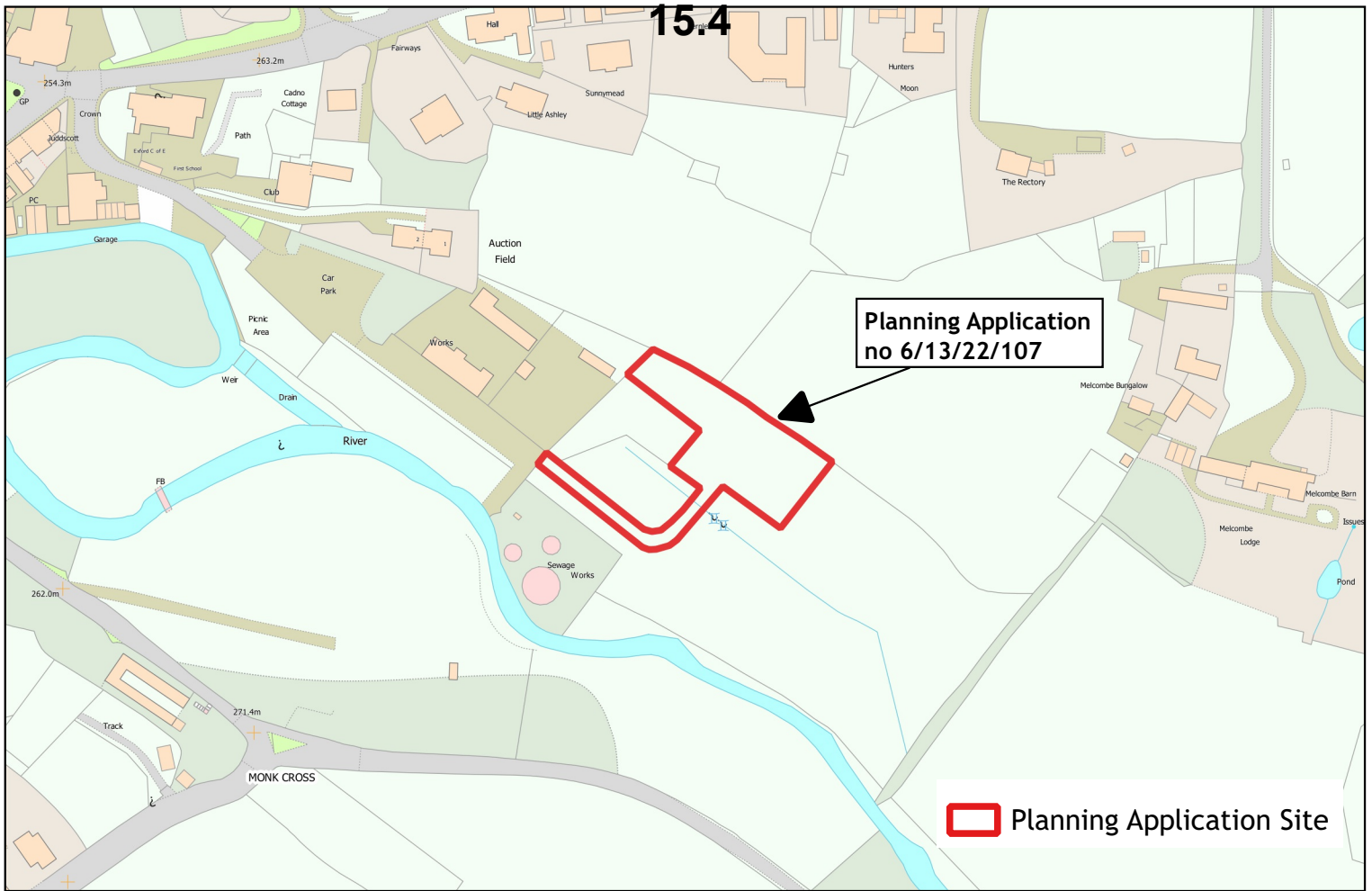
## 15.4

Public rights of way should be open (easy and safe to use) at all times.

Please note the following:

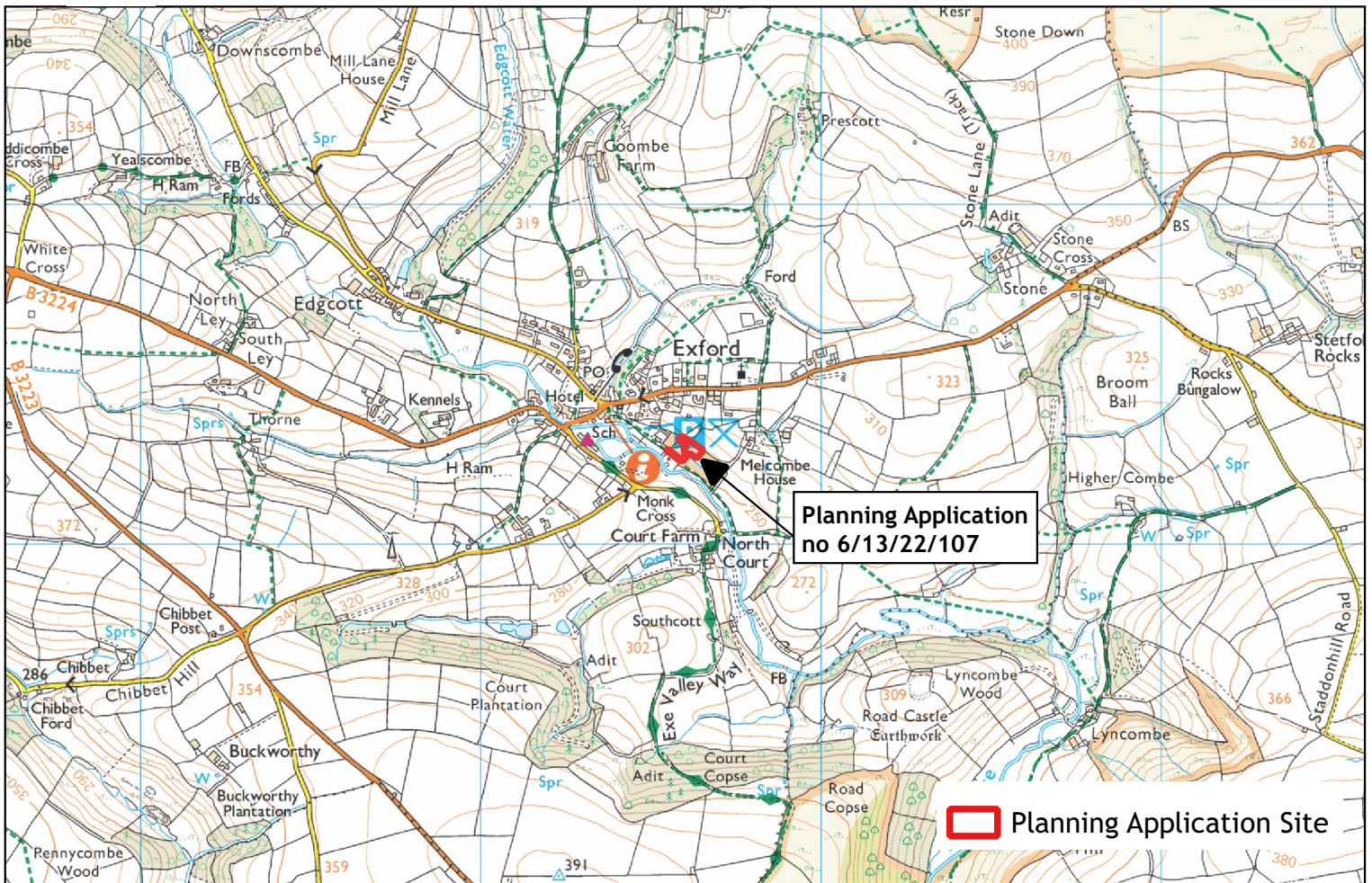
- Care should be taken to avoid obstructing or interfering with the public rights of way or creating a hazard for users.
- If it is impossible to avoid interference or potential danger, the appropriate legal steps (e.g. path closure application) should be taken in advance of any works. If this is likely 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
- 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 1:2,500

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**Overview Map**  
 Scale 1:20,000

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### Committee Report

Application Number:	6/9/22/102DC
Registration Date:	11-Mar-2022
Determination Date:	03-May-2022
Applicant	Charlotte Wray, Exmoor National Park Authority
Agent:	Ms. C Charlotte Wray, Exmoor National Park Authority
Case Officer:	Julie Norman
Site Address:	Varle Hill, Land By Cattle Grid - Easting 289029, Northing 132085
Proposal:	Discharge of condition 3 (written scheme of investigation) of approved application 6/9/21/107.
Recommendation:	Approve
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	The applicant is Exmoor National Park Authority.

### Relevant History

6/9/21/107 - Application under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for the proposed creation of banking to enclose two roadside pull in areas. Approved with Conditions - 05/07/2021

### Site Description & Proposal

The planning permission involves the creation of banking to enclose two roadside pull-in areas on Varle Hill in the parish of Dulverton. This is aimed at preventing illegal off-road driving and parking on the moorland which is causing damage to the moorland and historic environment features.

Varle Hill is grass moorland with some mixed scrub such as Hawthorn and is on the main access road to Tarr Steps, close to the settlements of Winsford and Dulverton.

Location 1 requires banking for approximately 20 metres; and

location 2 requires banking for approximately 12 metres.

All banking will be between 600mm and 750mm high with turf covering. Any soil or material used will be locally sourced subsoil rather than obtained from site.



## 15.5

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The current application seeks to discharge condition 3 of planning permission 6/9/21/107 which requires a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation.

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### **Consultee Representations**

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None consulted

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### **Representations**

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None received

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### **Policy Context**

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EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK LOCAL PLAN 2011-2031

GP1 Achieving National Park Purpose and Sustainable Development  
CE-S1 Landscape Character  
CE-D1 Protecting Exmoor's Landscapes and Seascapes  
CE-S4 Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment  
CE-D3 Conserving Heritage Assets  
CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure  
CE-D2 Green Infrastructure Provision  
CE-S6 Design and Sustainable Construction Principles  
CC-S1 Climate Change and Mitigation and Adaption  
CC-D1 Flood Risk  
AC-D2 Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development  
RT-D12 Access Land and Rights of Way

The National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration.

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### **Planning Considerations**

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The condition requires that the applicant secures the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI). A WSI has been submitted that outlines the proposed archaeological works to satisfy the requirement of the condition.

Varle Hill and Ashway Side is covered by an area of extensive former field system of likely medieval and post-medieval date, comprising field boundaries with ridge and furrow earthworks. The details confirm that works entail bringing in soil and turf material to the site rather than obtaining the material from excavation on the site associated with the development. The methodology for the construction of the banks are considered unlikely to cause additional damage to the recorded field systems or any underlying prehistoric remains and should add to their protection. As there is no

## 15.5

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ground intervention it is proposed that before and after works photographs are taken to form a record of the works on the site.

Overall, Officers are content with the details submitted and the details are considered to satisfy the requirements of the relevant condition.

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### **Human Rights**

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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**

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The submitted WSI is acceptable and satisfies the requires of condition 3 of the planning permission reference 6/9/21/107. The details can therefore be agreed, and the condition discharged

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### **Recommendation**

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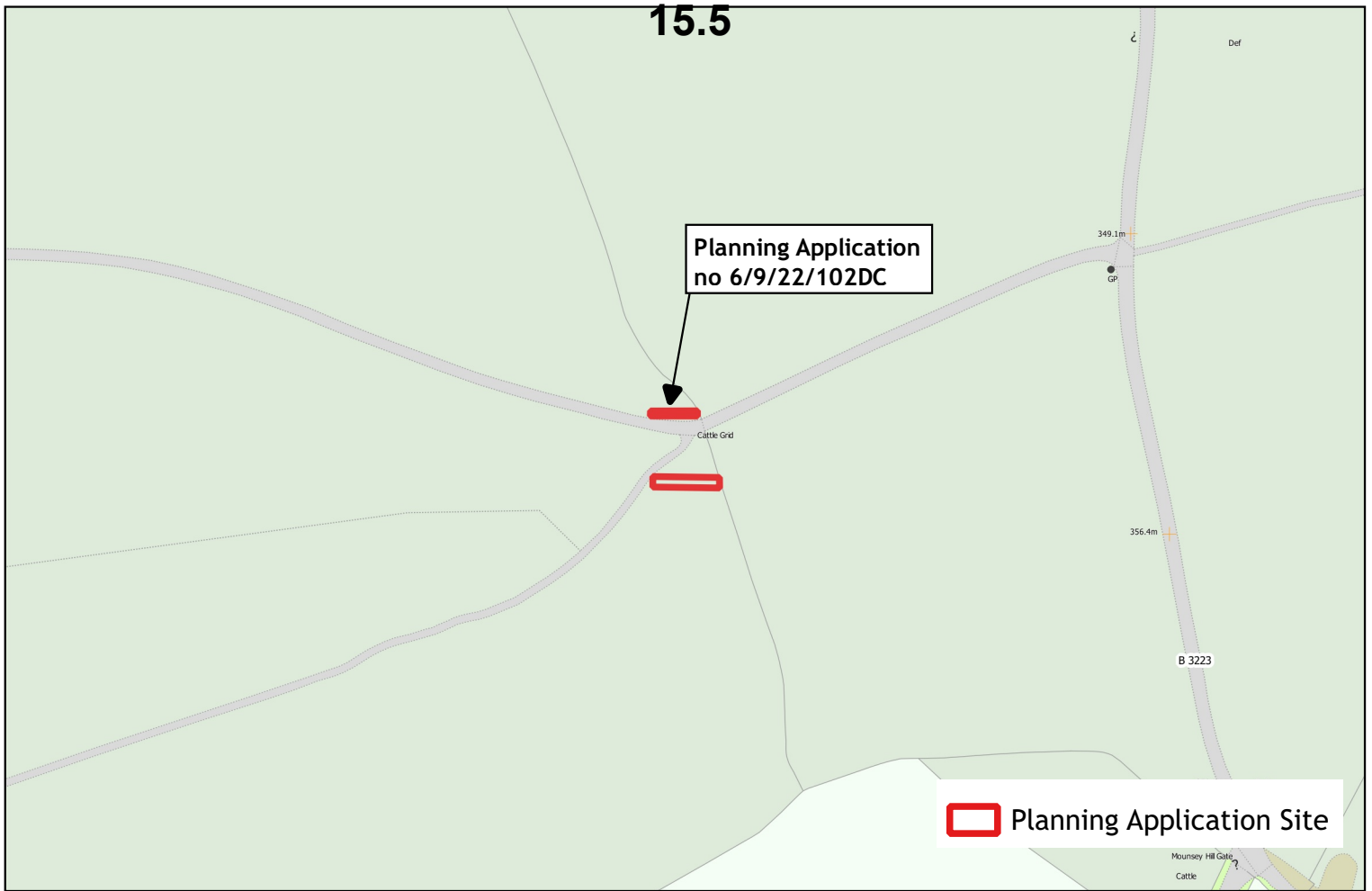
To approve the details and discharge condition 3 of planning permission 62/41/21/019.

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### **Informatives**

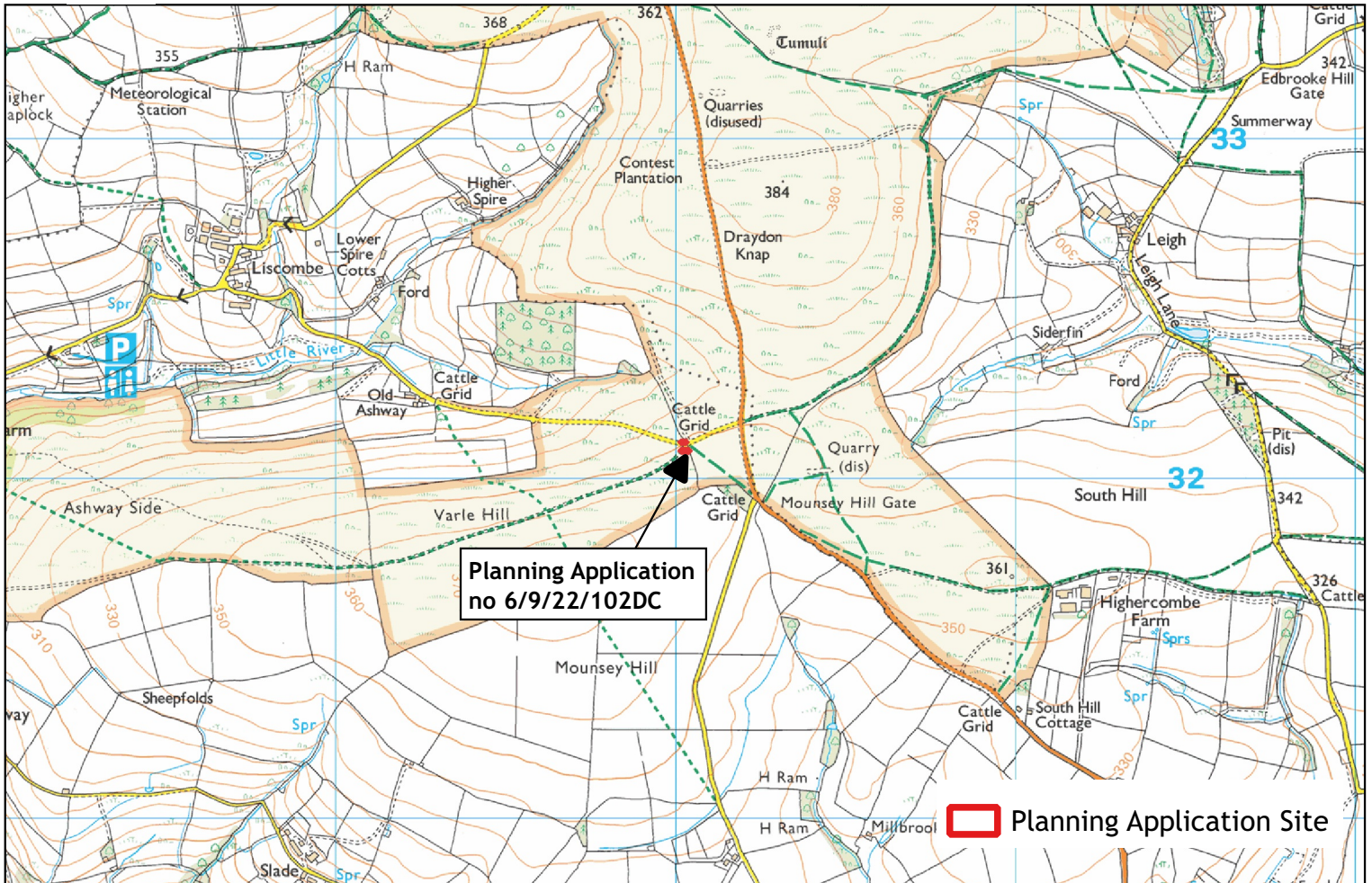
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N/A



Site Map  
Scale 1:2,500

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Overview Map  
Scale 1:20,000

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**Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive**

<b>Application Ref</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; Location</b>	<b>Decision and Date</b>
GDO 22/14	Mr A Maddock - Prior notification for proposed extension of agricultural building (9.15m x 4.57m) and creation of 2no. silage clamps. (GDO - Agricultural/Forestry) - WEST SLOWLEY FARM, LUXBOROUGH, WATCHET, TA23 0SY	23-Aug-2022 GDO - Prior Approval Not Req'd
6/34/22/106	J & Z; & R Willford - Proposed variation of conditions 1 and 3 of approved application 6/34/22/101. (Alteration/Lift Condition) - ALLERCOTT FARM, WHEDDON CROSS, MINEHEAD, TA24 7BN	23-Aug-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/29/22/110LB	Mr. D Raymond, National Trust (Gloucestershire and Somerset) - Listed building consent for the proposed installation of secondary glazing. (Listed Building Consent) - Moorlands, 54, Budleigh Hill, Selworthy, Somerset, TA24 8TH	23-Aug-2022 Approved with Conditions
62/49/22/002	Mr A Howes - Proposed change of use of the Heasley House, Heasley Mill, North Molton and its associated buildings and land from a hotel (Use Class C1) to a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3). Retrospective. (amended plan) (Full) - Heasley House Hotel, Road from Lower Fyldon Cross to Heasley Mill, North Molton, Devon, EX36 3LE	24-Aug-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/26/22/106	Ms C Bird, Roadwater Village Community Shop Ltd - Proposed Variation of Conditions 2 & 3 of approved application 6/26/22/101 to amend roof material and omit LED light. (Alteration/Lift Condition) - Roadwater Village Shop, Roadwater, Somerset, TA23 0QY	25-Aug-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/19/22/104	Ms H Purdey - Proposed external works to building. (Full) - HORNER FARM, HORNER, MINEHEAD, TA24 8HY	26-Aug-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/27/22/114	Mrs. Eastwood - Proposed demolition of existing garage and erection of a single storey side extension - resubmission of 6/27/21/125 (Householder) - SEAHAWK, VILLES LANE, PORLOCK, MINEHEAD, TA24 8NQ	05-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/29/22/111LB	Mr. D Raymond, National Trust (Gloucestershire and Somerset) - Listed building consent for proposed installation of secondary glazing. (Listed Building	05-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions

**Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive**

**Application Ref                      Applicant & Location                      Decision and Date**

	Consent ) - DUNKERY VIEW, BRANDISH STREET, ALLERFORD, MINEHEAD, TA24 8HR	
62/62/22/002	Mrs K Gee - Proposed formation of vehicular access and associated works. Part Retrospective. (Full ) - The Workshop, Higher Dean Farm, Trentishoe, Parracombe, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 4PJ	05-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
62/11/22/002	Mr M Tilley - Proposed construction of extension to agricultural building (9.2m x 13.9m). Retrospective. (Full ) - SHILSTONE FARM, BRENDON, LYNTON, EX35 6PU	05-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/26/22/107	Mr R Towler - Non-material amendment – householder – of approved application 6/26/21/109 to change all external doors and windows from uPVC-brown to aluminium-white and to remove the centre post supporting the ridge beam from the garden room, which will require the size of the two corner posts to be increased slightly. (NMA - Householder ) - Badgers Rest, 12 Brendon Close, Roadwater, Watchet, TA23 0RG	08-Sep-2022 Approved
WTCA 22/14	Mr. J Morgan, Somerset County Council - Works to Trees in Conservation Area: Remove limbs on lime tree to create minimum cycle-lane headway of 2.4m (WTCA ) - DUNSTER CASTLE, DUNSTER, MINEHEAD, TA24 6SL	08-Sep-2022 Approved
WTCA 22/13	Mr M Aylen - Works to Trees in Conservation Area: Fell to ground level beech tree with damaged crown to remove hazard (WTCA ) - EVENLODE, PARRACOMBE, BARNSTAPLE, EX31 4QJ	08-Sep-2022 Approved
WTCA 22/12	Emma Duncan - Works to Tree in Conservation Area: Felling of 1no. small apple tree. (WTCA ) - The Mill House, Road From Fox Goose Inn To The Mill House, Parracombe, EX31 4PE	08-Sep-2022 Approved
6/29/22/116DC	Mr B Eardley - Proposed discharge of condition 3 of approved application 6/29/21/119 (Discharge of Condition ) - Land at Selworthy Farm, Porlock. TA24 8TL - easting 291880: northing 145627	08-Sep-2022 Approved
WTCA 22/11	Miss V Webber - Works to Tree in Conservation Area: Crown reduction of bay tree by 50% (WTCA ) -	08-Sep-2022 Approved

**Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive**

<b>Application Ref</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; Location</b>	<b>Decision and Date</b>
	STAG COTTAGE, ST. GEORGES STREET, DUNSTER, MINEHEAD, TA24 6RS	
62/36/22/001	Mr R Cotton - Proposed replacement of conservatory with single storey extension (Householder ) - Hillside, KENTISBURY, BARNSTAPLE, EX31 4NH	09-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
62/41/22/028	Mrs V Squire - Proposed erection of garden shed. (Householder ) - 7 LYNWOOD COTTAGES, LYNTON, EX35 6BB	09-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/34/22/108	Mr A Berry - Proposed extension to existing community room. Resubmission of approved application 6/34/22/103 to move extension approx. 500mm to the Southwest. Retrospective. (Full ) - THE OLD DAIRY, TIMBERSCOMBE, MINEHEAD, TA24 7TU	12-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/43/22/105LB	Mr N Manning - Listed Building Consent for the reroofing of an outbuilding together with associated works. (Listed Building Consent ) - RANSCOMBE FARM, WOOTTON COURTENAY, MINEHEAD, TA24 8RA	12-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/43/22/104	Mr N Manning - Proposed reroofing of an outbuilding together with associated works. (Full ) - RANSCOMBE FARM, WOOTTON COURTENAY, MINEHEAD, TA24 8RA	12-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
62/50/22/018LB	Mr S Upstone - Listed building consent for the proposed replacement conservatory and new external openings together with internal changes, including a new staircase, replacement doors, new partition walls and reinstatement of fireplace. (Listed Building Consent ) - WALNER FARM, PARRACOMBE, BARNSTAPLE, EX31 4PG	13-Sep-2022 Withdrawn
62/50/22/017	Mr S Upstone - Proposed replacement conservatory and new external openings together with internal changes, including a new staircase, replacement doors, new partition walls and reinstatement of fireplace. (Householder ) - WALNER FARM, PARRACOMBE, BARNSTAPLE, EX31 4PG	13-Sep-2022 Withdrawn
GDO 21/12	Mrs. L J Robins, 5510508 - Prior notification for the resurfacing of access route to form an agricultural	14-Sep-2022

**Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive**

<b>Application Ref</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; Location</b>	<b>Decision and Date</b>
	access track (172m x 3m). (GDO - Prior Approval ) - WIDLAKE FARM, BRIDGETOWN, DULVERTON, TA22 9JE	Prior Approval Required-Prior Approval Approved
62/41/22/031	Mr K Williamson - Proposed single storey rear extension. (Householder ) - 5, LONGMEAD, LYNTON, EX35 6DQ	15-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
GDO 22/18	National Trust - Prior notification for a agricultural building for forestry use 16m x 8m (GDO - Agricultural/Forestry ) - Heddon Valley, Martinhoe, Devon, EX31 4PX	20-Sep-2022 GDO - Prior Approval Not Reqd
GDO 22/17	National Trust - Prior notification for a general-purpose agricultural building 12m x 8m (GDO - Agricultural/Forestry ) - Tattiscombe Farm, TRENTISHOE, PARRACOMBE, BARNSTAPLE, Devon, EX31 4PH	20-Sep-2022 GDO - Prior Approval Not Reqd
GDO 22/16	National Trust - Prior notification for general-purpose agricultural building 24m x 12m (GDO - Agricultural/Forestry ) - KIPSCOMBE FARM, COUNTISBURY, LYNTON, EX35 6NE	20-Sep-2022 GDO - Prior Approval Not Reqd
6/9/22/108	Mr & Mrs Carolan - Proposed single storey extension together with the installation of balcony, flue and associated works.  (Householder ) - Edgebrook, 21 , Valentines, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9ED	20-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/3/22/104	Mr R McGregor - Proposed creation of dormer window. (Householder ) - Orchard Cottage, Bury, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9ND	20-Sep-2022 Refused
62/11/22/012	Mr R Heighes - Proposed demolition of existing bungalow and erection of replacement single storey dwelling, together with associated works. (Full ) - Meadowsweet Bungalow, Oare, Lynton, EX35 6NU	20-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/29/22/115LB	Mr. D Raymond, National Trust (Gloucestershire and Somerset) - Listed building consent for the proposed installation of secondary glazing. (Listed Building Consent ) - MYRTLE COTTAGE, BOSSINGTON, MINEHEAD, TA24 8HF	22-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions

**Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive**

<b>Application Ref</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; Location</b>	<b>Decision and Date</b>
6/27/22/116	Nick Godfrey - Proposed erection of single storey rear extension, erection of porch extension and alterations to north elevation. (Householder ) - DANES BROOK, FURZELAND ROAD, PORLOCK, MINEHEAD, TA24 8NF	23-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
62/11/22/017LB	Mr. A Kemp, National Trust - Listed building consent for the proposed conversion of redundant Cart House into meeting room, commercial lettable space and public toilets, together with, associated works. Resubmission of approved application 62/11/19/003LB. (Listed Building Consent ) - KIPSCOMBE FARM, COUNTISBURY, LYNTON, EX35 6NE	27-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
62/11/22/016	Mr. A Kemp, National Trust - Proposed conversion of redundant Cart House into meeting room, commercial lettable space and public toilets, together with, associated works. Resubmission of approved application 62/11/19/002. (Full ) - KIPSCOMBE FARM, COUNTISBURY, LYNTON, EX35 6NE	27-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
62/50/22/014LB	Mr D Billingham - Listed building consent for proposed single storey extension together with modification to existing roof, installation of solar panels, rendering to existing walls and chimney, natural slate tile hanging on external wall and the replacement of existing windows. (Listed Building Consent ) - DUNBAR COTTAGE, PARRACOMBE, BARNSTAPLE, EX31 4PE	29-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
62/50/22/013	Mr D Billingham - Proposed single storey extension, together with modification to existing roof, installation of solar panels, rendering to existing walls and chimney and natural slate tile hanging on external wall. (Householder ) - DUNBAR COTTAGE, PARRACOMBE, BARNSTAPLE, EX31 4PE	29-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
62/41/22/029	Mr & Mrs Hawker - Proposed erection of 2no 2 bed local needs affordable dwellings. Resubmission of withdrawn application 62/41/21/015. (Full ) - WOODLANDS, Lynbridge Road, Lynton, EX35 6BD	29-Sep-2022 Withdrawn



**Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive**

<b>Application Ref</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; Location</b>	<b>Decision and Date</b>
6/8/22/105	Mr D Bowley - Proposed enclosing of existing link roof to form porch with rear extension. (Householder ) - 16, MEADOW CLOSE, WHEDDON CROSS, MINEHEAD, TA24 7AU	30-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/10/22/116	Mr G Dibble - Proposed replacement of existing outbuilding with a garden room and store. (Householder ) - 12, WEST CLOSE, DUNSTER, MINEHEAD, TA24 6SA	30-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
62/41/22/013	Mr P Baston - Proposed replacement of decking, balustrades and steps. Retrospective. (Householder ) - 11, CASTLE HEIGHTS, LYNTON, EX35 6JD	30-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/10/21/116LB	Miss J Forshaw - Listed building consent for the proposed partial demolition of chimney, insertion of ventilation grids, and repoint as necessary together with structural work. (Listed Building Consent ) - The Old Priory, 5, Priory Green, Dunster, Somerset, TA24 6RY	30-Sep-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/13/22/108	Mr D Fisher - Proposed erection of garage (Householder ) - STOCKLEIGH FARM, EXFORD, MINEHEAD, TA24 7PZ	04-Oct-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/10/22/121	Mr P Gaynor - Proposed erection of summerhouse and associated decking area. (Householder ) - BONNITON COTTAGE, DUNSTER, MINEHEAD, TA24 6TA	04-Oct-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/29/22/118LB	Mr. Dan Raymond, National Trust - Listed building consent for the proposed installation of secondary glazing. (Listed Building Consent ) - WREN COTTAGE, TIVINGTON, MINEHEAD, TA24 8SU	05-Oct-2022 Approved with Conditions
HRN 22/02	Ms K O'Sullivan - Hedgerow removal notice for the removal of 3.96m section of hedgerow to allow for the creation of gateway. (HRN ) - OLD STOWEY FARM, WHEDDON CROSS, MINEHEAD, TA24 7BT	05-Oct-2022 Approved
6/40/22/105LB	Mr P Webb - Listed building consent for the installation of water filtration and associated pumping equipment. (Listed Building Consent ) - LYNCOMBE, EXFORD, MINEHEAD, TA24 7PD	05-Oct-2022 Approved with Conditions

**Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive**

<b>Application Ref</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; Location</b>	<b>Decision and Date</b>
6/41/22/101	Ms M Smith - Proposed erection of double garage and workshop to be used in conjunction with Fernbank. (Full ) - Land to the north of Fernbank, Fernbank, Sandrocks Lane, Withycombe, Somerset, TA24 6QN	06-Oct-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/41/22/102DC	Mr. N Kelly, MHPF (UK) Ltd - Discharge of condition 17 of approved application 6/41/20/101 (Discharge of Condition ) - Felons View, RODHUISH CROSS, WITHYCOMBE, MINEHEAD, TA24 6QH	07-Oct-2022 Approved
62/50/22/019	Mr P Huntley - Proposed demolition of open sided sale ring and erection of building (320 sqm) for use as livestock sale ring and associated office, store and toilets. Resubmission of approved application 62/50/21/018. (Full ) - Blackmoor Gate Market, Kentisbury, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 4NW	07-Oct-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/29/21/120	Mr P Coombes - Proposed replacement of single storey utility space with two storey extension and erection of replacement garage. (Householder ) - COURTFIELD LODGE, BOSSINGTON LANE, PORLOCK, MINEHEAD, TA24 8HD	07-Oct-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/29/22/119LB	Mr. D Raymond, National Trust (Gloucestershire and Some - Listed Building Consent for the proposed installation of secondary glazing. (Listed Building Consent ) - PARADISE COTTAGE, TIVINGTON, MINEHEAD, TA24 8SU	11-Oct-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/29/22/120DC	Mr B Eardley - Discharge of conditions 3 (CEMP), 4 (Wildlife), and 5 (EMS) of approved application 6/29/22/101. (Discharge of Condition ) - Land at Tivington Farm, Easting - 292815, Northing - 145211	12-Oct-2022 Approved
6/10/22/117	Mr D Smith - Erection of three replacement dormer windows, one new dormer window, recovering of roof with natural slate and replacement balcony. Part Retrospective. (Householder ) - THE HAVEN, ELLICOMBE, MINEHEAD, TA24 6TR	12-Oct-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/34/22/105	Mr & Mrs J & Z Willford & Mr R Willford - Proposed replacement of residential mobile home with a residential timber cabin for seasonal workers and/or holiday letting together with associated works. (Full )	13-Oct-2022 Approved with Conditions

Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive

Application Ref	Applicant & Location	Decision and Date
	- ALLERCOTT FARM, WHEDDON CROSS, MINEHEAD, TA24 7BN	
6/10/22/115LB	Mr. J Percival, National Trust - Listed building consent for the proposed retention of existing temporary electricity cable and associated works. (Listed Building Consent ) - Dunster Castle, Dunster, Minehead, TA24 6NY	13-Oct-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/10/22/114	Mr. J Percival, National Trust - Proposed retention of existing temporary electricity cable and associated works. (Full ) - Dunster Castle, Dunster, Minehead, TA24 6NY	13-Oct-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/34/22/109	Mr H Harries - Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed installation of timber doors to replace existing UPVC doors. (CLOPUD ) - 1 Forge Cottages, Timberscombe, Minehead, TA24 7TT	14-Oct-2022 Approved
62/41/22/025	Mr & Mrs Tucker - Proposed extension to existing flat including change of use of existing roof space of The Globe to residential, together with replacement of roof covering, installation of rooflights and removal of chimney. Part retrospective. (Full ) - 1C, CAVENDISH PLACE, LYNTON, EX35 6AD	14-Oct-2022 Approved with Conditions
6/9/22/112	Mr & Mrs Vernon - Proposed Variation of Condition 2 of approved application 6/9/21/134 to reduce length of extension by 900mm, width by 800 mm and alter position of window and door. (Alteration/Lift Condition ) - 2, VALENTINES, DULVERTON, TA22 9ED	17-Oct-2022 Approved with Conditions