



EXMOOR

NATIONAL PARK

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
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18 December 2018

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 8 January 2019 at 10.00am.**

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

There is Public Speaking at this meeting, when the Chairman 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 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 Hazel Malcolm on 01398 322251 or email hmalcolm@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk).

The meeting will be **video and audio recorded**. By entering the Authority's Committee Room and speaking during Public Speaking you are consenting to being video and audio recorded.

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 Chairman so that those present may be made aware.

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

Sarah Bryan
Chief Executive

A G E N D A

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

1. Apologies for Absence

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

Members are asked to declare:-

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

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

3. Chairpersons's Announcements

4. Minutes (1) To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 4 December 2018 (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.

National Park area including determination of planning applications. This section of the meeting will be chaired by Mr M Dewdney (Deputy Chairperson (Planning)). If the Deputy Chairperson (Planning) is absent, the Deputy Chairperson of the Authority shall be preside.

6. Development Management: To consider the report of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development on the following:- **Please Note** there are no planning applications for consideration at this meeting.

7. Application Decisions Delegated to the Chief Executive: To note the applications determined by the Chief Executive under delegated powers (Item 7).

8. Site Visits: To arrange any site visits agreed by the Committee (the reserve date being Friday 1 February (am)).

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

9. **Exmoor Consultative & Parish Forum:** To receive and note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum held on 15 November 2018. (Item 9).
10. **Personnel Update**
Leaver – Stephanie Wade – Assistant Planning Officer – 31.01.19
11. **Any Other Business of Urgency**
12. **White Rock Cottage and the former Simonsbath School:** To consider the report of the Head of Conservation and Access. (Item 12)

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.

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES of the Annual Meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority held on Tuesday, 4 December 2018 at 10.00am in the Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton.

PRESENT

Mr R Milton (Chairperson)	
Miss A V Davis (Deputy Chairperson)	
Mr M Dewdney (Deputy Chairperson (Planning))	
Mrs L Blanchard	Mr E Ley
Mr R C Edgell	Mrs F Nicholson
Mr M Ellicott	Mr B Peacock
Mr B Heywood	Sir Richard Peek
Mr N Holliday	Mr S J Pugsley
Mr J Hunt	Mr B Revans
Mr I Jones	Mrs P Webber
Mrs C Lawrence	Mr V White

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Patrinos, Mr M Ryall and Mrs E Stacey

67. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

In relation to Agenda Item 6.1 – Application No. 6/14/18/104 – Proposed change of use of agricultural land to site one shepherd’s hut for private leisure use. Retrospective (Full) – Land West of Larkbarrow Corner, Exford, Minehead, Somerset, Mr B Heywood declared a personal interest as the applicant was his sister. In the interests of public perception Mr Heywood indicated he would withdraw from the meeting when this item was considered.

In relation to Agenda Item 6.2 – Application No. 6/42/18/110 – Proposed removal of a single earth bank running from Sparrows Lane to the east side of High Leys field. Retrospective. Re-submission of application 6/42/17/106 (Full) – Foxtwitchen House, Sparrows Lane, Withypool, Somerset, Mr R Milton declared a personal interest as a neighbour whose property overlooked the applicants land. In the interests of public perception, Mr Milton indicated he would withdraw from the meeting when this item was considered.

In relation to Agenda Item 6.3 – Application No. 62/11/18/012 – Proposed replacement of timber fascias and windows with UPVC alternative (Full) – Brendon & Countisbury Village Hall, Brendon, Lynton, Devon, Miss A V Davis declared a personal interest as a Devon County Councillor as DCC Locality Funding had helped finance improvements to Brendon Village Hall. Miss Davis indicated she would withdraw from the meeting when this item was considered.

In relation to Item 11 – Heart of the South West – Joint Committee – Authority Update, Miss A V Davies declared a personal interest as a Member and Vice Chairman of the Strategic Transport Board and Chairman of Peninsula Rail Task Force. Miss Davis indicated she would withdraw from the meeting when this item was considered.

In relation to Item 18 – Land at Cutcombe Market the following interests were declared:

- Sir Richard Peek declared a pecuniary interest as a shareholder in the proposed purchaser of the land, and indicated he would withdraw from the meeting when this item was considered.
- Mr S Pugsley declared a personal interest as his father was a director of the proposed purchaser of the land, and indicated he would withdraw from the meeting when this item was considered.

68. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS: Following the recent announcement of his death, Members of the Authority paid tribute to Mr Edwin Beckett, a former Chairman of the Calvert Trust Exmoor and founding member and Chairman of the Exmoor Trust. In expressing their condolences to his family, Members recognised Mr Beckett's great organisational skills and extensive fundraising work, which brought great benefit to the people of Exmoor.

69. MINUTES

- Confirmation:** The **Minutes** of the Authority's meeting held on 6 November 2018 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
- Matters arising:** There were no matters arising.

70. PUBLIC SPEAKING:

See Minutes 71 for details of public speakers.

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

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Before the officer presentation, Mr B Heywood left the meeting room.

71. Application No. 6/14/18/104

Location: Land West of Larkbarrow Corner, Exford, Minehead, Somerset

Proposal: Proposed change of use of agricultural land to site one shepherd's hut for private leisure use. **Retrospective (Full)**

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

Public Speaking:

- (1) Mrs M Groves, Exmoor Uprising
- (2) Mrs E England, applicant
- (3) Mr T England, applicant

The Authority's Consideration

The meeting noted that planning officers recommended the application be refused, as the isolated position of the application site was judged to lack compliance with the principles of Policy RT-D9 of the Local Plan, and because the siting of the shepherd's hut in open countryside is considered to cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the landscape.

The Authority Committee held a wide-ranging debate and, whilst a number of Members shared the planning officers' views, when put to the vote a small majority of Members judged that the landscape harm caused by the development was not so severe as to refuse planning permission.

Therefore, Members resolved to grant planning permission and delegated to officers to apply strict conditions to limit the use of the development solely for the benefit of the applicant, Mrs England.

RESOLVED: To grant retrospective planning permission, subject to the following conditions:-

1. The development hereby approved shall be retained in strict accordance with the plans submitted with the application, drawing number 1 (title – Shepherd's hut) and drawing number 2 (title – Retention of shepherd's hut), both date stamped by the Local Planning Authority 21 September 2018.

Reason: To ensure that the development accords with the approved plans.

2. The development hereby approved shall ensure solely for the benefit of the applicant, Mrs England. When the use of the development by the applicant ceases, the Shepherd's hut, and/or any subsequently approved replacement structure, and all materials and equipment brought on to the land in connection with its use, shall be permanently removed from the application site and the land returned to a condition to match that of the immediately adjoining field.

Reason: To acknowledge the particular personal circumstances in this case, to retain control over the future use of the site in the interests of the scenic beauty and character of this part of the National Park landscape, to control the character and volume of traffic attracted to the site in the interests of highway safety and to control the level of activity at the site in the interests of local amenity.

3. Only the Shepherd's hut hereby approved shall be placed on the application site, in accordance with the position shown on the approved plan, unless details for a replacement structure have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the replacement structure is provided in accordance with the agreed details. No subsequent replacement structures shall be placed on the application site without prior written agreement of the Local Planning Authority. The details to be submitted shall include elevation drawings and details to confirm the position, appearance and the external finishing materials for the structure, together with details of its colour.

Reason: To acknowledge the isolated location of the development and to acknowledge the particular circumstances of the applicant in this case that led to the Authority's decision to grant planning permission, and to control the development in the interests of the character and appearance of the landscape.

4. No other structures, fences, buildings, services, trackway or ancillary structures shall be erected within or place on the application site without the express grant of planning permission by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To acknowledge the isolated location of the development and to acknowledge the particular circumstances of the applicant in this case that led to the Authority's decision to grant planning permission, and to control the development in the interests of the character and appearance of the landscape.

5. No artificial external lighting shall be installed within the application site.

Reason: In the interest of the character and appearance of the landscape, local amenity and wildlife interests, and in the interests of the tranquillity and dark sky experience of the National Park in accordance with Policy CES2 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031.

After the vote, Mr B Heywood returned to the meeting room.

The meeting closed for recess at 11.07am and reconvened at 11.13am

Before the officer presentation, Mr R Milton left the meeting room.

72. Application No. 6/42/18/110

Location: Foxtwitchen House, Sparrows Lane, Withypool, Somerset

Proposal: Proposed removal of a single earth bank running from Sparrows Lane to the east side of High Leys field. Retrospective. Re-submission of application 6/42/17/106 (Full)

The Authority considered the **report** of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development. Listen to Kieran re: para 170 & 172

The Authority's Consideration

The Authority were advised that the National Planning Policy Framework has recently been updated and the paragraphs referred to in the report have now been renumbered Paragraphs 170 and 172.

RESOLVED: To refuse retrospective planning permission for the reasons set out in the report and authorise enforcement action and all resulting legal action, as required.

After the vote, Miss A V Davis left the meeting room.

73. Application No. 62/11/18/012

Location: Brendon & Countisbury Village Hall, Brendon, Lynton, Devon

Proposal: Proposed replacement of timber fascias and windows with UPVC alternative (Full)

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

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

After the vote, Miss A V Davis and Mr R Milton returned to the meeting room.

74. LAND FORMERLY PART OF HIGHER WOOLCOTTS FARM, BROMPTON REGIS

The Authority considered the [report](#) of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.

RESOLVED: To authorise Officers to commence Court proceedings through the Authority's Solicitor to seek to remedy the harmful effect on the area caused by the untidy land, in the interests of the character and appearance of this part of the National Park landscape, by prosecution for non-compliance with the Notice.

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

76. **SITE VISITS:** There were no site visits to arrange.

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

77. RESPONSE TO THE GLOVER REVIEW CALL FOR EVIDENCE

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

The Authority's Consideration

In relation to the draft response included at Appendix 2 of the report, the Head of Strategy and Performance tabled the following additional points, which arose following informal discussion with Members:

1. Review overall language and tone to reflect key messages around being bold, ambitious, with lots of energy and ideas. Highlight / pull out key messages so they are clearer
2. Emphasise that Exmoor National Park is a place where we test and trial new ideas. We have a track record of delivery. Include more examples of innovation, leading the way, having real impact e.g. Exmoor Ambition
3. Include positive messages about National Parks being Peoples' Parks and the opportunities available for a diversity of users, with associated benefits for health and well-being.
4. Greater emphasis on the strength of our partnership / collaborative working within the National Park, and also across boundaries, connecting to surrounding areas.
5. Add in references to working collaboratively with other Protected Landscapes (including AONBs), particularly in the south west
6. Highlight the importance of the National Park to the regional economy as well as nationally – putting the 'National' back into National Parks
7. Include examples highlighting the positive contribution of land use planning for local communities as well as natural beauty and wildlife, including planning policies that are not generally available elsewhere. Also recognise the implications of National Park designation for local communities and businesses and some of the tensions that this creates

8. Highlight the opportunities for National Parks to act as test beds of rural revitalisation in response to the real challenges we face as a deeply rural area. Greater emphasis on the importance of future rural development funding and policy post Brexit, which reflects these challenges and opportunities and can be determined locally and delivered locally.
9. Emphasise the importance of flexibility to determine the best way to deliver national objectives within the National Park, rather than top-down prescriptions.
10. Recognise that each National Park (and other Protected Landscapes) is different and so different approaches and solutions will be necessary, one size doesn't fit all. Celebrate what is special about Exmoor
11. Propose that there should be a National Park 'champion' in government to promote National Park interests across Government departments (similar to the Tree champion)
12. Add a response to Question 19 to suggest some principles for the process of designation or boundary changes ie clearer, simpler, quicker, more transparent
13. Add comments recognising that the criteria for designating National Parks will not fit all new proposals for designations. Query whether there should be a different designation for urban landscapes – e.g. City parks
14. Corrections / clarifications

Following their debate, Members requested that the following additional points be considered for inclusion in the final Authority response to the Glover Review Call for Evidence:

- a. Q 13 & 14 - Reference that we are full Members of the Heart of South West Joint Committee and therefore already engaging in quite an innovative way.
- b. Q 13 & 14 - Recognise that every National Park is very different. Provide more context about Exmoor and that we are unique, despite being small and that people choose to live and work here even though it might be difficult. Highlight the sustainability of many of our rural villages which retain a shop, church, etc and the benefits we can provide to people. Perhaps illustrate with a map. Information available from Somerset Intelligence Network and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- c. Q17 - Add further points regarding the importance of outreach work to connect with those people who do not live in the National Park, and particularly those in urban areas.
- d. Q20 – Propose that the response to this question highlights the value of National Parks, illustrating from our experience the benefits that designation brings in looking after the environment and landscape and managing development.
- e. Q 19 & 20 – The current process is very slow and complicated, for example the Suffolk Coast Heath AONB is the first designation for 20 years. It also took 3 years for the Minister to approve the Lakes/Dales Extension so there are opportunities for Government to help speed up and simplify the process.

- f. Q20 – emphasise the importance of all of the countryside whilst recognising the relative importance of protected areas. If there are new landscape designations they must still meet national criteria to retain the quality of the landscape.
- g. The Head of Strategy and Performance confirmed that information about the call for Evidence has been circulated through the Parish and Consultative Forum and a meeting has been organized for Parish and Town Councils on 7 December to provide further information about the review. All responses must be made directly to the Review Panel via their website, and not to the Authority.

RESOLVED:

1. To agree the key points for responding to the Glover Review Call for Evidence set out in Appendix 2.
2. To delegate to the Chief Executive authority to make any changes agreed by Members and agree the final submission with the Chairman before submission.

78. HEART OF THE SOUTH WEST – JOINT COMMITTEE – AUTHORITY UPDATE

The Authority considered the [report](#) of the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the progress report setting out the work of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Joint Committee since its establishment in March 2018.
2. To agree to delegate the development and endorsement of the HotSW Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) to the HotSW Joint Committee (noting that final approval of the HotSW LIS rests with the HotSW Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Government).
3. To note the Budget statement for 2018/19 set out in Appendix B and that in accordance with the decisions taken at the time the Committee was established the Council will be asked to make an annual budgetary provision to meet the support costs of the Joint Committee in line with the 2018/19 contribution. Final clarification on any additional 2019/20 budget requirement will be provided following the completion of the review of the Joint Committee's role, function and management support arrangements and development of its work programme for 2019/2020.
4. To agree the Budget and Cost-sharing Agreement set out in Appendix B to the report.

79. GET INVOLVED PROJECT - UPDATE

The Authority considered the [report](#) of the Head of Information and Communication.

RESOLVED:

1. To receive the update on the Get Involved Project
2. To recognise the evolution of the Get Involved concept as an essential component of the Authority's Engagement Strategy.
3. To use the report for background information in deliberations and considerations at the annual Business Planning workshop.

80. PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING THE BUSINESS PLAN 2017-2020

The Authority considered the **report** of the Head of Strategy and Performance

RESOLVED:

1. To note the progress in implementing the Authority's key commitments set out in the Business Plan 2017-2020.
2. To delegate to the Finance and Performance Advisory Panel and Leadership Team further scrutiny of Authority performance across all the Business Plan actions for the next reporting period to 31 March 2019.

81. UPDATE OF MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT, STANDING ORDERS AND ASSOCIATED GUIDANCE

The Authority considered the **report** of the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the amendments as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.
2. To approve and adopt the revised Member Code of Conduct and associated Code of Conduct in Practice guidance attached to the report.
3. To approve and adopt the revised Standing Orders attached to the report.

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

83. ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF URGENCY: There was none.

Before the officer presentation, Sir Richard Peek and Mr S Pugsley left the meeting room.

84. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS:

RESOLVED: That the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business arising in Item 18 and that the following information would be considered which is exempt information as presented in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended): Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

85. LAND AT CUTCOMBE MARKET

The Authority considered the confidential report of the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED: To approve the recommendations in the report.

After the vote, Sir Richard Peek and Mr S Pugsley returned to the meeting room.

The meeting closed at 1.50pm

(Chairperson)

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
EXMOOR CONSULTATIVE AND PARISH FORUM**

MINUTES of the meeting of the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum held
on Thursday, 15 November 2018 at 10.30am at Winsford Village Hall.

PRESENT

Steven Pugsley	Exmoor National Park Authority and Chairman of the Forum
John Anson	Cutcombe Parish Council
John Atherton	Brendon & Countisbury Parish Council
John Bray	Winsford Parish Council
Ron Buckingham	Elworthy Parish Council
Val Carveth	Exton & Bridgetown Parish Council
Kevin Connell	Winsford Parish Council
Sarah Cookson	Brushford Parish Council
Ian Cowling	Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Trust
Marilyn Crothers	Nettlecombe Parish Council
Andrea Davis	Representing ENPA, DCC & Kentisbury Parish Council
Martin Dewdney	Exmoor National Park Authority and West Somerset Council
Richard Edgell	ENPA, DCC and North Devon District Council
Roger Hall	Porlock Parish Council
Samantha Harris	Exmoor Young Voices
Bruce Heywood	Exmoor National Park Authority and West Somerset Council
Alison Kent	Exmoor Local Access Forum, Chair
Graham Lamacraft	Dunster Parish Council
PC Mark Langworthy	Devon & Cornwall Police
William Lock	Exmoor Young Voices
Susan J May	Exmoor Trust
Malcolm McCoy	Porlock Parish Council
Mel Mileham	Winsford Parish Council
Karen Mills	West Somerset Council
Robin Milton	Exmoor National Park Authority
Frances Nicholson	Exmoor National Park Authority and Somerset County Council
Jeremy Payne	Oare & Culbone Parish Meeting
David Peake	Somerset County Council Area Highways (Minehead)
Richard Peek	Exmoor National Park Authority and North Molton Parish Council
Peter Pilkington	Timberscombe Parish Council
Fred Rawle	Exton Parish Council
Martin Ryall	Exmoor National Park Authority
Jo Sharp	Somerset County Council Highways Traffic Engineer
Stephen Short	Devon County Council
Leslie Silverlock	Exmoor Young Voices
Hugh Thomas	Greater Exmoor Shoots Association
Roger Webber	Cutcombe Parish Council
Vivian White	Exmoor National Park Authority and Cutcombe Parish Council
Pat Williams	Withypool and Hawkridge Parish Council
James Wilmoth	Wootton Courtenay Parish Council
David Woodbury	Combe Martin Parish Council
Tom Yandle	Badgeworthy Land Company & Devon & Somerset Stag Hounds
Ueli Zellweger	Winsford (private landowner)

1. Apologies for absence were received from:

Louise Crossman	Invitee
Simon Derby	Savills
Dr Roger Ferrar	Invitee
Molly Groves	Exmoor Uprising
Nick Holliday	Exmoor National Park Authority
Eric Ley	Exmoor National Park Authority and North Devon Council
Alastair Rodway	Lynton and Lynmouth Town Council
Richard Snelling	National Trust
Rachel Thomas	The Exmoor Society

National Park Authority staff in attendance:

Sarah Bryan, Chief Executive
Dean Kinsella, Head of Planning and Sustainable Development
Dan Barnett, Access & Recreation Manager

2. **MINUTES:** The [minutes](#) of the Forum meeting held on 13 September 2018 were agreed as a correct record, subject to amendment to reflect that Mr N Thwaites had attended the meeting.

Matters Arising

- **Connecting Exmoor:** The meeting was advised that the Airband contract is coming to an end but they are still keen to connect as many customers as they can. Those still looking for connectivity – including Village Halls – were encouraged to go to their website (www.airband.co.uk) and fill out the online form. A final wrap-up meeting will be held in December to reviewing all such applications.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:

- **“Is the intensity of commercial shooting on Exmoor sustainable”:** Ueli Zellweger read a statement raising concerns about the increase in the number of shoots and the impact they have on the local community such as noise pollution, increased traffic, the accumulation of lead ammunition on grazing land and other environmental impacts.

In response, Hugh Thomas, Chair of the Greater Exmoor Shoots Association (GESA) outlined the work they have undertaken to address some of the issues raised. GESA will continue to work closely with the National Park Authority to promote best practice in relation to any feedback received.

Sarah Bryan, Chief Executive, advised that the National Park Authority are very aware this is a complex topic and understand the importance of continuing to gather data to understand the environmental, visual, economic and social impacts. Whilst there is still work to do around encouraging best practice, further improvements can only be made by continuing to listen and talk to each other.

- **Exmoor Young Voices:** Will Lock, Chairman of Exmoor Young Voices, introduced Sam Harris, the new Young Co-Ordinator. Will thanked Jade Evans for all her valuable work during the time she was involved with the project. In addition to the update tabled at the meeting, the following points were advised:

- A TV production company, involved with the Scottish Rural Youth Project, will be filming 2 or 3 young people on Exmoor who have had housing issues or are trying to start up a business. Details of the programme date will be shared when known.
- An EYV website is in the process of being built.
- Another Self-Build Seminar is planned for next May, on the Devon side of the park.

3. SPEEDING THROUGH THE NATIONAL PARK – HOW IT MIGHT BE CONTROLLED:

The meeting received presentations from the following representatives:-

- **Somerset County Council (SCC)** – David Peake (Highway Service Manager) and Jo Sharpe (Traffic Engineer for Taunton Deane & West Somerset)
- **Devon County Council (DCC)** - Steve Short (Neighbourhood Highway Engineer (North))
- **Devon & Cornwall Police (D&CP)** – PC Mark Langworthy (NBM Lynton)

Details of issues faced by various Parish Councils across Exmoor was tabled at the meeting and the following points were made by the representatives:

- SCC are undertaking a county wide Parking Review which will have implications on other workstreams:-
“Local SCC Traffic Engineers will no longer deal with individual and very local traffic engineering requests that benefit a small number of individuals, including requests for new or amendments to existing signing, lining, speed limits, HGV’s restrictions, disabled parking bays, etc but focus on those schemes which have the greatest benefit. These minor requests will be included in the wider parking review for the area and form part of the evidence base for road safety and congestion issues.”
- SCC advised there was no current evidence to suggest there are any real problems at any of the locations specified.
- In order to identify if there is an issue at a particular location, collision data is gathered as evidence – if there is a cluster site where a lot of accidents are happening, or there is consistent speeding, steps would be taken to address resources by looking to reduce the speed limit or putting in another scheme such as a priority system.
- DCC advised that speed checks in the locations specified had previously been carried out and were compliant, however they would be prepared to carry out further checks if requested.
- In relation to large vehicles crossing over white lines, it is possible to take the central line out in certain locations which does help to reduce speed. Please advise DCC of the specific location so this can be looked at.
- D&CP acknowledged issues in relation to the bypass around Parracombe and advised it may be possible to ask Highways to do more to highlight the bend.
- Noisy motorbikes may be due to their design and not necessarily because baffles have been taken out. However, if it is possible to gather evidence i.e. a recording, number plate, etc, D&CP will be happy to look into it further.

Comments from the floor

- Parish Councils requested more detailed guidance on what evidence is required by the authorities in order for any action to be taken.
- It was felt that Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) have proved effective in the past and Wheddon Cross and Exford Parish Councils are looking to jointly purchase their own system. However there are concerns about whether the data will be analysed.
- Whilst grateful that Highways and Police representatives had taken the time to attend the meeting, forum members encouraged them to take note of the high attendance rate and listen to the grain of local opinion, in order to understand how important the issue of speeding was to local communities.
- Concerns were raised that Parish Councils are not given advance notice of cycling events that take place in the National Park and that such events often have insufficient safety marshals. Whilst the Park Authority are not responsible for controlling road based events, it was agreed they would discuss with Highways and the Police and consider how best to ensure there is advance contact between event organisers and the relevant Parish Councils.
- The meetings attention was drawn to the 20's Plenty campaign (www.20splenty.org) and it was suggested that it was within the power of local communities to promote safety in their villages in a number of ways, including by:-
 - Boosting the number of Community Speed Watch schemes in operation
 - Encouraging those who are driving poorly and recklessly to desist.

4. EXMOOR COASTAL STRIP ISSUES INCLUDING SOCIAL MOBILITY:

The meeting received an update from Roger Hall and Malcolm McCoy (Chair) of Porlock Parish Council:

- Social Mobility is the measure of the socio economic status of one generation compared to the other - West Somerset has the worst social mobility score in England.
- Initiatives to address this problem include the Government's Opportunities Programme which has 4 main priorities:
 1. Every child has a great start in life (under 5 years)
 2. Educational excellence in the classroom
 3. Transition to adulthood (11 – 19 years)
 4. Skills for employment and business
- Other initiatives include programmes around:
 - A women's opportunity escalator - to encourage more women back into work force
 - A Small Business Enterprises and Business Investment programme which includes a digital business transformation project
 - An apprentices and employer led skills programme – aimed at helping businesses take on apprentices and guide apprentices into opportunities
 - A young people's opportunity escalator – aimed at seamlessly taking young people from school into the business world
 - A joint initiative with the newly formed Minehead College at Hinckley Point C to create a remote interactive classroom

- The Porlock Vale Coastal Community Team has been set up in conjunction with West Somerset District Council and is working on the following projects:-
 - A new tourism website for Porlock Vale has been created
 - An Economic Plan for the area has been commissioned
 - Improving access to Porlock Marsh to make it more attractive to tourists
 - Improving the infrastructure of the Porlock Visitor Centre, particularly when it comes to digital marketing

Malcolm McCoy provided an update on tourism in the Porlock area and suggested the Park Authority could give consideration to the following:-

- Actively encourage the small (6m) motor home market by providing larger car parking spaces and facilitating the provision of more small sites.
- Increased provision of simple seats on rights of way to enhance the walking experience of older visitors.
- Improve the clarity of rights of way signage – in line with the continental system of providing GPS map reference, distance and walking time on clear metal signs.
- Promote our Dark Skies designation with “planet walks” around villages with sponsored storyboards.

5. 2026 DEADLINE FOR CLAIMING RIGHTS OF WAY BASED ON HISTORICAL EVIDENCE:

Alison Kent, Chair of the Exmoor Local Access Forum, gave a presentation on “Discovering Lost Ways”:-

- The National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949 required all County Councils in England and Wales to produce a Definitive Map with Statements showing all paths with acknowledged access for public use. The Definitive Map and Statements for Somerset were produced in the 1960s & 1970s.
- Recording a path on the definitive map is conclusive evidence that public rights exist.
- All unrecorded footpaths and bridleways created before 1949 cannot be recorded after 1 January 2026. This ‘cut off’ date by which to claim these historical rights of way was set in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- It is estimated there are 20,000 km of pathways in England that are unrecorded, and there will be many unrecorded across Exmoor.
- Recording a path requires gathering evidence from a wide variety of historical sources from tithe maps, inclosure awards, Finance Act maps. It might require visits to National and Local record offices, estate archives, parish and community papers.
- Further information on how to go about recording a path on the definitive map can be found in the following publications:
 - Rights of Way: Restoring the Record by Sarah Bucks and Phil Wadey <http://www.restoringtherecord.org.uk/>
 - Somerset Roam: <https://roam.somerset.gov.uk/roam/Map>

- 6. FARMING ISSUES:** There were no issues to raise
- 7. PLANNING ISSUES:** Dean Kinsella, Head of Planning & Sustainable Development advised the forum that the Exmoor National Park Landscape Character Assessment 2018 has now been adopted and published.
- The document provides objective advice on landscape in the context of development management and planning enquiries. Copies of the publication can be viewed at the National Park offices in Dulverton and at the following link on the Authority's website:-
<http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/Whats-Special/landscape/landscape-character-assessment-2018>
- 8. GLOVER REVIEW OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES – CALL FOR EVIDENCE LAUNCH -** Defra's call for evidence was launched on 20 October and will close on 18 December. Organisations and individuals can respond using an online form - details can be found at the following link: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use/landscapes-review-call-for-evidence/>
- 9. EMERGING ISSUES OR TOPICS FOR WIDER DEBATE:** The following were noted:
- Simonsbath Project
 - National Parks' Review
 - Wider landscape management issues – *incl motorhomes / wild camping*
 - How to involve young people in farming on Exmoor
 - Commercial activity of NPAs
 - Renewable Energy
- 10. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting will be held on Thursday 17 January 2019 at 10.30am in Winsford Village Hall.
- 11. OTHER BUSINESS OF URGENCY:** There was none

The meeting closed at 12.47 pm

(Chairman)

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

8 January 2019

White Rock Cottage & the former Simonsbath School

Report of the Head of Conservation & Access

Purpose of the report: To update Members on the LEADER funding bid for White Rock Cottage and the former Simonsbath School, and to request the release of allocated monies in reserves in order to progress the consolidation of the buildings.

RECOMMENDATION(S): The Authority is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the release of up to £200,000 allocated ENPA reserves to be spent on the stabilisation of White Rock cottage and the former Simonsbath School buildings, and on the demolition of later buildings
- (2) Approve in principle the acceptance of LEADER funding for the buildings
- (3) To note that a further paper will be brought during 2019 which will set out an end use for the buildings, in line with the principles set out below.

Authority Priority:

Conservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of understanding and enjoyment. Working with the community and business

Legal and Equality Implications:

The equality impact of the recommendation(s) of this report has been assessed as follows: None

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:

None anticipated

Financial and Risk Implications:

On the acquisition of the buildings in 2013, the Authority set aside £200,000 in order to enable the site to be taken forward once uses were identified. This paper recommends that this money is now released to be set beside LEADER programme funding. See Section 5 below.

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The redundant White Rock Cottage and former Simonsbath School lie at the centre of Simonsbath. They were acquired by the Authority in September 2013 from West

Somerset Council. The buildings are very dilapidated having not received any substantial investment since before the closure of the school in 1970.

- 1.2 In December 2013 a local Steering Group was set up to identify ways of utilising these buildings and the broader heritage of Simonsbath for the benefit of visitors, the community and local businesses. The Steering Group agreed a Vision for Simonsbath:

“Simonsbath will be renowned as having a unique history; an ideal place to discover the story of The Royal Forest and Exmoor - a landscape with a ‘hidden’ side: lost gardens, an unfinished mansion, subtle clues to its busy farming and industrial past; with a deeper history stretching back nearly 8,000 years. People will find an excellent visitor experience, and a well-presented range of things to see and do.

Simonsbath’s heritage will be well looked after, shared, used and appreciated. Projects will also generate broader benefits for the community, such as business opportunities, access improvements, ‘get involved’ projects, social history projects, other events and activities.”

The Steering Group has met every two months since then and has carried out research, options appraisals and feasibility studies (the results of the options appraisal was approved by the Authority in April 2016). It also contracted an architect to develop plans for the buildings on the site and a landscape architect to produce a Conservation Statement for Simonsbath village. One of its goals is to see a Trust for Simonsbath, and some of the Steering Groups members are currently submitting a Deed of Trust to the Charity Commission to achieve Charitable Incorporated Organisation status.

- 1.3 New research has identified historical documents in a loft in Kidderminster, relating to the Knight family’s time on Exmoor, and these show that White Rock Cottage (actually two cottages) was built in February 1820 and was one of the earliest – and only complete surviving - of John Knight’s ‘Scottish croft-style’ buildings. It was built to house the head gardener and estate manager, but also provided an eyecatcher in the adjacent gardens, to which they are therefore intimately connected both aesthetically and historically. The uncompleted gardens themselves are a very rare example of a Picturesque landscape, the style of which is to emphasise natural features and to create contrived viewpoints of such phenomenon. The gardens draw inspiration from Hestercombe (near Taunton), Downton Castle (near Ludlow) and Hafod (near Aberystwyth) all of which had familial ties with John Knight. The school building was added to White Rock Cottage in 1857 as the village grew and has since then become the focus of much continuing social history and interest.

- 1.4 The options that were developed by the Group are to create a small unmanned interpretation space in White Rock Cottage and to enable the school room to be used by the community. The neighbouring gardens, of which White Rock Cottage is an intrinsic part, will be restored and revealed. These options were consulted on in December 2015 and received broad support from the community. In 2016 a feasibility study concluded that these options were achievable. A Trust is proposed to run the buildings, to seek further funding and to maintain the sites in the long run.

- 1.5 All of this hard work led to a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2017 to fund the building works, develop the adjacent 1820s gardens and to set up a Trust. Unfortunately the Heritage Lottery Fund rejected the bid in March 2018.

2. CURRENT FUNDING SITUATION

- 2.1 Since the rejection of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid, other funding routes have been investigated. In September 2018, ENPA applied to the Western Somerset LEADER programme which is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). LEADER has various priorities, and our application is under their 'Support for culture and heritage activity'. On 20 November 2018 we were informed that we had been successful in securing £88,000 to progress the restoration of Ashcombe gardens and this includes the building at White Rock Cottage and the former Simonsbath School.
- 2.2 The LEADER funding bid required detailed costings for the build works at the site and we have obtained these figures through a tendered procurement exercise through which five local building firms submitted detailed quotations.
- 2.3 The total LEADER 'on paper' project costs are £305,000. £200,000 is allocated in the Authority's reserves; there is £15,009 allocated from Caremoor and LEADER's contribution is £88,259.64.

3. TIMESCALE

- 3.1 The LEADER funding is dictated by the termination of the European-funded LEADER programme which requires all funds to be spent and accounted for by March 2020. This means that works to the buildings will need to be carried out from March 2019 and completed by November 2019. This allows for a two month snagging period before a project sign off by the end of January 2020.

4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 A number of principles underpin the current proposal, and the Authority is invited to support these principles:
- 4.2 White Rock Cottage and the former Simonsbath School represent important historic assets in the history of Exmoor as a whole and also to this isolated, small community.
- 4.3 The Authority is seeking a use for these buildings which benefits the local community, local businesses and visitors. A number of possible uses have been identified, namely a community space, interpretation space or affordable housing. The Authority is not committed to a specific use.
- 4.4 The Authority would prefer no significant continuing obligation to the buildings. However, any change of ownership of the assets would require consent from LEADER prior to the project end date of 2025.
- 4.5 The Authority wishes to ensure that White Rock Cottage retains a strong link to the gardens, which represent a rare and nationally important garden in the Picturesque style.

5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Capital schemes would normally come before Members for approval when there is greater certainty over the end purpose, funding, future ownership and control. For reasons identified in the body of this report there are still some significant unknowns.
- 5.2 The scheme as currently scoped envisages the Authority restoring the building and handing the asset over to a Trust. Should the Trust not materialise then the Authority could explore alternative uses, such as sale for affordable housing which also carries risks.

Financial Risks

- 5.3 In any build project there is a potential for overspend. There are inherent risks in working with old buildings but at White Rock the basic structure of the building has been deplastered and is therefore visible and solid. It is also a single storey building. A significant contingency is included within the budget.
- 5.4 There are some risks in terms of VAT liability. This includes the ability of the Authority to recover VAT on the construction costs. This is dependent upon the eventual use of the asset, how it is disposed of and over how many years ENPA invests in it.

Risks Associated with the Trust

- 5.5 If the Trust did not acquire sufficient trustees, failed to achieve charitable status or could not meet the criteria set out by the Authority as part of its 'duty of care' to the buildings, then transfer to the Trust may not be able to proceed.
- 5.6 To complete and fit out the building will need further funding which the Trust would need to find. In order to mitigate this risk the Authority would put a requirement on the Trust to be financially solvent and to have a viable business plan.
- 5.7 The Trust could require ongoing support from ENPA for running the building and/ or delivering a service. The Authority would need to assess the benefits and costs of its involvement.

Risks Associated with the Affordable Housing Option

- 5.8 An alternative option could be to sell as an affordable home. (If the Authority leases property, tenants acquire rights to buy). Risks associated with this option also include the need for planning permission and the potential for a LEADER grant reclaim. The LEADER grant sets out that ENPA cannot dispose of the asset before the project completion date of 2025 without its consent. However, ENPA officers have discussed this with the Programme Leader of the relevant LEADER programme and have had verbal reassurance that they would in principle consider use as an affordable home.

Reputational Risk.

- 5.9 The Authority purchased White Rock Cottage and the former Simonsbath School in September 2013. For the last five years there has been no discernible progress on the buildings at the site, which have been scaffolded and covered with protective sheeting – although of course a great deal of work has taken place behind the scenes. There is a high reputational risk for the Authority and for the Steering Group if the buildings are seen as purposeless and that no progress is being made towards their renewal.

6. PROPOSAL

- 6.1 In order for any scheme to be progressed which retains the historic buildings, the same programme of works are needed, initially to demolish later additions, and then to stabilise the historic buildings by reroofing, new fenestration and the repair of other openings, floor coverings, wall coverings. The provision of services will also be included (electricity connection, heating and private water supply). These works have been costed at around £260,000 which includes several elements. Firstly, stabilising the building and architectural services (up to £220,000 made up of £88,000 from LEADER and £132,000 from ENPA allocated reserve); secondly the provision of services such as private water supply (a borehole), lighting and basic heating (up to £40,000 from ENPA allocated reserve).
- 6.2 The Authority is asked for approval in principle to accept the LEADER funding (subject to detailed officer discussion with the LEADER team on 11th January). Approval is also requested to draw down the necessary funding from reserves to fulfil the terms of the LEADER grant. £200,000 was set aside in ENPA's reserves to enable building work to be carried out at the site. This includes sufficient sums to enable fundamental fitting out and servicing.
- 6.3 As the stabilisation work proceeds, a detailed paper will be brought to Authority to set out the various options for the end use of the buildings. The overall intention is that the buildings will be divested into a trust, but as the trust has not officially come into existence it is prudent to have another option and this, under planning policy, is most likely to be affordable housing. It is envisaged that the paper setting out the options and recommendations will be brought in summer 2019.
- 6.4 In summary, the LEADER funding when combined with the monies currently in reserves and allocated Caremoor funding, will allow the building stabilisation works at White Rock Cottage and the former Simonsbath School to be completed during 2019. This will ensure the preservation of one of the most important structures (and one of the earliest) in John Knight's reclamation of Exmoor. A 'Scottish' cottage (built in February 1820) and the former school which served the children of the farmers and workers who transformed the old Royal Forest of Exmoor from 1857-1970. From January 2019 a group of volunteers will also begin work on the restoration of the gardens. Evocatively named 'The Unexpected Garden' by one of the Steering Group members, because of its surprising situation in a remote valley at over 1,000 feet above sea level, high on Exmoor, the gardens and White Rock Cottage will provide a strong focus for visitors and volunteers, and will benefit the community and local businesses.

Rob Wilson-North
Head of Conservation & Access
17 December 2018

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

Reports must include a list of background papers (ie those documents relating to the subject matter of the report which disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based and have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report). A copy of each of the documents included in the list should be open to inspection by members of the public. [Refer to Section 100D(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.]