

DARTMOOR COMMONERS' COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Dartmoor Commoners' Council held at Two Bridges Hotel, Princetown on Wednesday 13 March 2024.

Participants:

Mr P French – Chairman	Mr J Cooper	Ms T May
Mr L Branfield – Vice-Chairman	Mr W Dracup	Mr M Radmore
Mr P Abel	Mr K Edwards	Mr J Reddaway
Mrs M Alford	Mrs C Faulkner	Mr J Shears
Mr R Ashford	Mr J Jordan	Mr T Stratton
Mr P Cleave	Mr S Lee	Mrs P Warren
Mr A Coaker	Mrs K Little	Mrs A Webber
		Mrs A Willcocks.
Mrs S Sloman	Mrs K McKechnie (DLPO)	

1. Chairman's Introduction

The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Mr P Heard & Mr R Leigh.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the Council Meeting held 24 January 2024 were confirmed & signed.

A comment was raised on whether the public addresses to Council should be minuted as the opportunity is offered in advance of the formal meeting. This will be considered ahead of the AGM.

4. Matters outstanding from previous meetings:

4.1 Natural England Stop Notice: Unit 61 of South Dartmoor SSSI

Council has submitted its comments to the appeal lodged with the Secretary of State over the Refused Consent to graze this area. An acknowledgement has been received. The matter will be dealt with by a hearing, the details of which Council will be notified of in due course. The Chairman thanked Anton Coaker for his input in drafting the response.

5. Correspondence Received

A list of correspondence received had been circulated to all Council Members with copies emailed to some Members upon request.

6. Matters brought forward at the direction of the Chair

6.1 Local Commoners' Association Secretary Support Group

Ann Willcocks reported that as part of the Dartmoor Test & Trials, several meetings were held by Janet Dwyer that brought Local Commoners' Association (LCA) secretaries together to discuss their role. Those who attended found the meetings very useful. With this in mind, & following comments made in the 'Dartmoor Review', Ann Willcocks would like to see a LCA Secretary Support Group created, providing an opportunity for LCA Secretaries to be in touch with each other & to share issues, best practice & knowledge. Council Members were in favour of this initiative. The Chairman gave an undertaking

that this will be progressed & stated that any support in helping to get this up & running would be appreciated.

7. Reports from Members representing Council at meetings:

7.1 Our Upland Commons Local Area Group*: 30 January 2024 – Mary Alford

7.2 Dogs on Dartmoor Partnership Sharing: 13 February 2024 – Karla McKechnie

Comprehensive meeting involving stakeholders with different agendas: Devon Wildlife Trust are trying to deter dogs from their land due to erosion & wildlife loss; National Trust are using a number of initiatives to encourage people to visit their properties & bring dogs; Dartmoor Livestock Protection Officer trying to manage dogs on Dartmoor & highlight the penalties, prosecutions & consequences of having a dog out of control.

7.3 Dartmoor Test & Trials Project Board: 27 February 2024 – Philip French

This initiative is nearing completion & it was acknowledged that Professor Janet Dwyer has done a good job. She will submit her report to Defra by the end of March, a copy of which will be publicly available in due course.

7.4 Dartmoor MOD Working Party: 12 March 2024 – John Cooper

Dry fire training in the Cramber area has now ceased altogether. This year's ten Tors event is being held on May 11th & 12th.

*Notes available. If any Council Member wishes to receive copies of any notes, please email office@dartmoorcommoners.org.uk

8. TB Control Plans 2024

Cattle Graziers' Packs for 2024 have been circulated to all Local Commoners' Association secretaries in order that they can apply for a licence, as part of the Dartmoor TB Control Plan, that reduces the number of TB movement tests required by TB Regulations. The Advice Notes on Cattle, recently adopted by Council, one for members of the public & the other to be used by cattle graziers to show due process to mitigate risks to the public from cattle, have also been sent to Local Commoners' Association secretaries for onward circulation to cattle graziers on their common. Council's TB Working Group have their annual 'touch base' meeting with APHA later this month

9. Update from Dartmoor National Park Authority

Simon Lee reported on:

Ranger Team Update - Fred Hutt to fill Sector Ranger position starting on 2 April. He will cover the same sector as Rob Taylor used to have. Fred has extensive knowledge of countryside management & will be a real asset to the team. New assistant Ranger, Sam LeBailly, is settling in well with the team & has already helped to address some of the backlog in PRoW work in the Northern sectors.

Dogs - On the 2nd & 3rd of March, the Ranger Team hosted a Dogs on Dartmoor weekend to coincide with the start of the lambing & bird nesting season. They worked in partnership with the Police, Karla & the National Trust to focus all available resources over the weekend to engage with dog owners, rewarding good behaviour where it was witnessed but importantly challenging inappropriate behaviour where found. Simon is being interviewed by Radio Devon over the next couple of days to reinforce the Dogs on Lead message that went out with DNPA's recent press release.

FiPL - Rachel Cooper has recently joined the FiPL team as an additional advisor to build in extra capacity to deliver more projects over the coming year. The FiPL team are planning to host drop-in events in May for anyone interested in learning more about the scheme & how they can apply for project funding.

Concerns were raised again on the numbers being permitted to partake in some **recreational events**, in particular cycling & there was a call to cap the numbers on certain types of events. There were also concerns that the procedures set out in the Recreational Events Policy were not being followed as some common owners were not aware of forthcoming events. Simon offered to take this up with the Recreation Team at DNPA.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Council will be held on Wednesday 1 May 2024 at 7.30pm at the Two Bridges Hotel, Princetown.

The Chairman declared the public meeting closed & proposed a motion to go into a closed session. The outcome of these discussions is recorded in the confidential section of the meeting minutes, available to Council Members only.

Signed: *Philip French*

Date: *1 May 2024*