

## ITEM 2

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

of the meeting of the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum held  
on Tuesday 17 December 2019 at 2.00pm at the Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross

#### PRESENT

*N.B. Only those who signed the attendance register are listed*

Mike Ellicott	Exmoor National Park Authority and Chairman of the Forum
Andrea Davis	Exmoor National Park Authority & Devon County Council
Andrea Gonzalez	Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)
Brian Turley	Forestry England
Cathy Nicholls	CPRE Somerset
Chris Binnie	Farmer
Chris Eveleigh	Farmer
Eric Ley	Exmoor National Park Authority & North Devon District Council
Frances Nicholson	Exmoor National Park Authority
Francesca Willes	Local resident
Graham Lamacraft	Dunster Parish Council
Guy Thomas-Everard	Exton Parish Council
H Rose	Minehead Town Council
Hugh Thomas	Exmoor & District Deer Management Society (EDDMS)
Irene Cristofaro	Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)
J Dascombe	Luccombe Parish Council
James Wilmoth	Wootton Courtenay Parish Council
John Addicott	Beagles
John Anson	Cutcombe Parish Council
John Bray	Winsford Parish Council
Jonathan Webber	Farmer
Katherine Williams	Exmoor Hill Farming Network
Ken Urquhart	FFDMG
Kevin Connell	Winsford Parish Council
Malcolm McCoy	Porlock Parish Council
Marilyn Crothers	Nettlecombe Parish Council
Martin Ryall	Exmoor National Park Authority
Mike Groves	Exmoor Uprising
Molly Groves	Porlock Parish Council
P Gannon	Old Cleeve Parish Council
P Storey	Local Resident
Peter Green	Veterinary Surgeon (BVSc Cert EO MRCVS)
Peter Pilkington	Exmoor National Park Authority & Somerset West & Taunton Council
Philip Beauvois	Skilgate Parish Council
Rachel Thomas	The Exmoor Society
Richard Bishop	Treborough Parish Council
Richard Edgell	Exmoor National Park Authority & Devon County Council
Richard Peek	North Molton Parish Council
Robin Milton	Exmoor National Park Authority & East Anstey Parish Council
Roger Foxwell	Cutcombe Parish Council

Roger Webber	Farmer & Cutcombe Parish Council
Sarah Cookson	Brushford Parish Council
Sarah Takle	Exmoor National Park Authority & Timberscombe Parish Council
Steven Pugsley	Exmoor National Park Authority & Somerset West & Taunton Council
Sue Batter	Farmer
Tessa Theed	Combe Sydenham
Tom Yandle	Badgworthy Land Company
Vivian White	Exmoor National Park Authority & Cutcombe Parish Council
William Theed	Combe Sydenham

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

Alastair Rodway	Lynton and Lynmouth Town Council
Andy Milne	Somerset West & Taunton District Council
Jeremy Holtom	Exmoor National Park Authority and Parracombe Parish Council
John Wibberley	Invitee
Nick Holliday	Exmoor National Park Authority
Susan J May	Exmoor Trust

### National Park Authority staff in attendance:

Sarah Bryan, Chief Executive  
 Dean Kinsella, Head of Planning & Sustainable Development  
 Rob Wilson-North, Head of Conservation & Access  
 Dan Barnett, Access & Recreation Manager  
 Richard Eales, Ranger  
 Rosie Wilson, Ranger  
 Judy Coles, Corporate Support Officer (Note Taker)

2. **MINUTES:** The [minutes](#) of the Forum meeting held on 12 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

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

### 3. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:

- It was questioned whether the agendas and minutes of the Authority's Partnership Groups would be made available on the Authority's website. Sarah Bryan, Chief Executive advised that some minutes were published i.e. this Forum and the Exmoor Local Access Forum, but that the majority of Partnership Groups were not decision making bodies and therefore historically notes have not been published. The Authority is currently discussing this request with the groups concerned and will report back to a future meeting.
- It was questioned what the current situation was in relation to the use of timber versus other materials (eg plastic or aluminium) for windows and conservatories within the National Park. The Head of Planning & Sustainable Development, advised that the Authority's policies within the Local Plan are very much orientated to using traditional materials where possible, in order to protect the character of dwellings within communities and to ensure the continuation of traditional construction techniques for future generations to enjoy. However, a pragmatic

approach would always be taken and each application would be assessed on its merits.

#### 4. REVIEW OF THE EXMOOR CONSULTATIVE & PARISH FORUM

The Head of Planning & Sustainable Development informed Forum Members that 10 responses to the review had been received and the following conclusions reached:-

**Meeting Location** – the locations will be varied throughout the National Park to encourage a more diverse range of people to attend.

**Agenda** – Forum Members will be encouraged to set the agenda for meetings, with the National Park Authority taking a step back from this.

**Meeting Notes** – as the Forum is not a decision making body, it has been agreed informal notes will be taken rather than formal minutes which will no longer need to be approved by the National Park Authority. Instead the Forum's Chair / Deputy Chair will approve them and they will be circulated as soon as possible after the meeting.

**Number of Meetings** – there will be 4 quarterly meetings on an annual basis (2 daytime and 2 evening), with a 5th meeting held in reserve on an 'as needs' basis should any urgent issues need to be discussed.

**Electronic Papers** – in future papers will be circulated via email, and will no longer be printed and posted.

##### **2020 Meeting Dates**

- Thursday, 19 March 2020 @ 10.30 am – Exmoor House
- Thursday, 11 June 2020 @ 7.00 pm – Venue TBC
- Thursday, 17 September 2020 @ 7.00 pm – Venue TBC
- Thursday, 12 November 2020 @ 10.30 am – Venue TBC

#### 5. WILD DEER AND BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS - PRESENTATION BY PETER GREEN BVSC CERT EO MRCVS

An audio recording of the presentation and subsequent discussion can be listened to via the following link (*timestamp = 0.14 – 1.44*)

<https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/about-us/meetings-agendas-reports/exmoor-consultative-and-parish-forum/17-december-2019>

- All UK deer species can be infected with bTB - specific clinical signs are uncommon and most commonly present as poor condition and sometimes diarrhoea, once the disease is well advanced
- Any internal abscess in a deer is suspicious of bTB
- Within the bTB cattle High Risk Area, bTB may be present in 1-2% of the deer population, increasing to up to 4% where prevalence of infection in badgers is high
- Infected deer shed infection predominantly through saliva and mucous, at low levels in faeces and hardly at all in urine. In contrast Badgers shed infection in urine, faeces, mucous and via pus from infected wounds
- Deer are almost invariably a *spill-over host* of bTB (*spillover = infection of wild animals from domestic stock*)

- Deer infected with bTB are an *indicator* of high levels of bTB infection in the local environment. They are *very rarely* a significant *reservoir* of infection (*reservoir = maintaining infection within the population*)
- Cattle-to-cattle transmission of bTB is significantly under-estimated by the farming industry
- Artificial feeding of wild deer poses the greatest risk of transmission
  - *M bovis* survives for weeks on roots partially consumed by infected deer
  - Deer-to-deer transmission at feed sites has produced hot-spots of maintenance within high density deer herds
  - Intensive pheasant rearing is a potential high risk

### **Local problems**

- bTB reported to occur regularly in red deer in a few locations, but no reliable data and therefore no current firm evidence of maintenance status
- APHA reluctant to take further samples: therefore deer stats under-reported
- Deliberate misinformation about deer from pro-badger elements
- Farmers and deer shooters choosing not to shoot deer in poor condition
- Infected carcasses left to decay and be scavenged

### **Could there be a limited reservoir of maintenance in red deer locally?**

- A maintenance population of red deer is possible BUT NOT CONFIRMED
- *IF* maintenance population exists, risk to cattle is still low

### **Sensible advice to farmers**

- Very low risk with deer and cattle grazing together
- Higher risk if both have access to feeders, silage clamps and especially root crops
- Attempts to eradicate deer are pointless
- Have sensible deer management in place
- Culling males has very limited impact on population numbers
- Use qualified deer stalkers who will resist trophy shooting and can identify disease
- Cull deer in poor condition and report all abscessed deer to APHA
- Dispose of suspect carcasses properly

### **Sensible advice to everyone:**

- **Do not feed wild mammals** – it encourages them to aggregate unnaturally

### **The way forward on Exmoor?**

- Collaboration, honesty, transparency and co-operation between neighbouring landowners across a wide area will be essential
- Establish the facts – collect and plot data
- Consider deer populations on a landscape scale – not just property wide

- Determine population prevalence
- IF THERE IS A bTB MAINTENANCE POPULATION:
  - Plan and implement deer management as a working co-operative – farmers need to share info
  - Establish and support an evidence-based, science-led deer management group

**Points noted following Forum Discussion:**

- Reporting suspected case of bTB in truly wild deer (not enclosed deer) is not likely to result in your cattle being put on restriction, unless there is a high risk they have come into close contact with a deer with lesions.
- If a deer has been shot, it is not a good idea to field dress it in case it does have TB. It should be taken elsewhere to be washed down so as not to contaminate the moor/pasture.
- It was agreed that a working co-operative needs to be set up to take forward the work required to address this issue, including a fund to help meet the cost of safely disposing of infected deer was required.

Forum Members thanked Mr Green for a very informative presentation.

**Action:** The Park Authority will act as intermediary to bring together relevant groups to investigate ways of establishing a disposal fund and effective deer management group.

- 6. REVIEW OF PROTECTED LANDSCAPES (GLOVER REPORT)** – This item was postponed to a future meeting.
- 7. CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY** – This item was postponed to a future meeting.
- 8. HISTORIC SIGNPOST PROJECT** – Mr Steven Pugsley updated the Forum that whilst Heritage Lottery funding for this project has now ended, work is still ongoing. The Steering Group are meeting regularly and will be arranging further training in 2020 and are negotiating with CareMoor regarding additional funding. Records have been made of the signposts that still need work and the signposts already repaired will not be allowed to deteriorate. As it is much cheaper to repair the fingerposts than cast new ones, Forum members were urged to pick-up any damaged parts they may find on the roadside and notify the Steering Group.

**9. FARMING ISSUES**

Mr Roger Foxwell suggested the National Park Authority should arrange a public meeting with the wider farming community regarding the Glover Review as a matter of urgency. He also suggested that an updated report on the state of farming on Exmoor should be produced, as the last one was published in 2015.

**10. PLANNING ISSUES**

- The Head of Planning & Sustainable Development advised the Forum that the transition to a new planning system had not gone as smoothly as anticipated. Work is ongoing with the IT provider to resolve the issues, and it is hoped that Officers will soon be able to reduce the backlog of validation and registrations. Forum members

were asked for their patience during this challenging time, and to pass on details of any issues they experience when using the system.

- It was questioned why Winsford Parish Council were required to determine both a normal planning application and a General Development Order for 2 mobile phone masts as part of the new Emergency Services network. Dean Kinsella advised that any mast of 15 metres or over will require a planning application which would normally be determined within 8 weeks, but can be extended to allow for further debate if required. For masts under 15 metres, the operator can submit a Prior Approval which requires the Authority to determine the application within 56 days, after which the operator is able to erect the mast regardless.

**11. EMERGING ISSUES OR TOPICS FOR WIDER DEBATE:**

- Review of Protected Landscapes (Glover Report) – *postponed item*
- Climate Change Emergency – *postponed item*
- Burning of Heather

**12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting will be held on Thursday 19 March 2020 at 10.30am at Exmoor House, Dulverton.

**13. OTHER BUSINESS OF URGENCY:** There was none