



# EXMOOR

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## NATIONAL PARK

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
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This matter is being dealt with by the  
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20 November 2025

### EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**To: The Members of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE of the Exmoor National Park Authority**

A meeting of the Standards Committee will be held at Exmoor House, Dulverton on **Tuesday, 2 December 2025 at 12.00pm.**

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 a Public Speaking at this meeting, when the Chairperson will allow members of the public two minutes each in which to ask questions, make statements, or present a petition relating to any item on the Agenda. Anyone wishing to ask questions should notify the Democratic 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 details are set out above).

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

Members of the public may use 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

As set out above, the Authority welcomes public engagement with its work and believes that everyone attending a meeting of Exmoor National Park Authority or one of its Committees has the right to be treated with respect and to feel safe at all times, including before, during and after the meeting they attend.

The Authority understands that some situations can be difficult and lead to frustration; however, the Authority is committed to promoting an environment where everyone feels listened to and respected and is not subjected to unacceptable behaviour. Further guidance is provided in our Customer Notice, available on our [website](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk).

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

1. **Election of Chairperson**
2. **Election of Deputy Chairperson**
3. **Apologies for Absence**
4. **Declarations of Interest**
5. **Minutes:** (1) To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 4 March 2025 (Item 5).  
(2) To consider any Matters Arising from those Minutes.
6. **Business of Urgency:** To introduce any business which by reason of special circumstances the Chairperson, after consultation with the Chief Executive, is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency and to resolve when such business should be ordered on the Agenda.
7. **Public Speaking:** The Chairperson will allow members of the public to ask questions, make statements, or present a petition on any matter on the Agenda for this meeting or in relation to any item relevant to the business of the Standards Committee. 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.
8. **Actions under the Authority's Member Code of Conduct:** To consider the verbal report of the Solicitor & Monitoring Officer (Item 8).
9. **Overview of Complaints and Compliments:** To consider the report of the Head of Enterprise & Operations (Item 9).

Details of the decisions taken at this meeting will be circulated 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 the Democratic Support Officer, at Exmoor House. These documents can also be made available in alternative formats such as large print, on tape and on disc.

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the Standards Committee held at 3.00pm on Tuesday, 4 March 2025 in the Committee Room at Exmoor House, Dulverton.

**PRESENT**

Mr S J Pugsley (Chairperson)  
Mr M Ellicott  
Mr W Geen

- 15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies for absence was received from Mr J Patrinos and Miss E Stacey.
- 16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none.
- 17. MINUTES:**
- i. **Confirmation:** The [Minutes](#) of the Standards Committee's meeting held on 5 November 2024 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
  - ii. **Matters arising:** There were no matters arising from those Minutes.
- 18. BUSINESS OF URGENCY:** There was none.
- 19. PUBLIC SPEAKING:** There were no public speakers.
- 20. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW 2024-25:** The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Chief Finance Officer and the Solicitor & Monitoring Officer.

**The Committee's Consideration**

In relation to the good practice questions set out in the governance self-assessment, it was suggested and agreed that the response to question 16, "Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found to be satisfactory?" be amended from "no" to "partly".

The importance of consultative committees and engagement with parishes to ensure openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement was emphasised, and it was hoped the Exmoor National Park Forum would play an improved role.

**RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Annual Governance Review.
2. To note the results of the Governance self-assessment at Section 9 subject to amendment to the response to question 16 from "no" to "partly".
3. To approve the Annual Governance Statement as set out in the Appendix for inclusion with the Annual Accounts for 2024-25.

## 21. OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Head of Enterprise and Operations.

### **The Committee's Consideration**

While agreeing there was no room for complacency, Members congratulated Officers on the relatively small number of complaints received by the Authority (six) between 1 April 2024 and 17 February 2025 and were pleased to note the 48 compliments received during the same period.

<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To note the overview report of general complaints and compliments received by the Authority.</p>
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(The meeting closed at 3.20pm)

Chairperson

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### STANDARDS COMMITTEE

2 December 2025

### OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

#### Report of the Head of Enterprise and Operations

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:** To provide details of complaints and compliments received during the period 18 February to 31 October 2025.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Standards Committee is recommended to consider the overview report of general complaints and compliments received by the Authority

**Authority Priority:** To meet the requirements of legislation where applicable to National Parks and conduct Authority business in line with good practice and the 7 principles of public life.

**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 Localism Act 2011 requires the Authority to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.

**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 Human Rights Act.

**Financial and Risk Implications:** Reputational and other risks including criminal liability could arise should the Authority fail to act on complaints received.

**Climate Change Implications:** None identified.

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 Standards Committee Members will be aware that an updated complaints procedure was introduced in April 2021 to improve efficiency of the process:

- A first informal stage for complaints which are dealt with by the relevant Officers
- A simplified 2-stage formal process dealt with by the relevant Senior Manager; then escalated if needed to the Complaints Officer / Chief Executive

1.2 At the Standards Committee meeting on 4 March 2025, an overview of formal complaints received by the Authority for the period 1 April 2024 and 17 February 2025 was provided.

1.3 The table below details the formal complaints received for the period 18 February 2025 and 31 October 2025.

Stage	Date	Outcome
<p><b>Stage 2</b> - Planning – Concerns about the Authority’s course of action in an enforcement case relating to use of a building.</p>	<p>Feb 2025</p>	<p><b>Complaint not upheld.</b> This is a long standing and complex planning matter which has now reached the end of our formal complaints process. An explanation was provided in relation to the matters raised including that the enforcement investigation remained open whilst awaiting the outcome of a Planning Appeal.</p> <p><b>Footnote:</b> Following the outcome of the Appeal in July 2025, the enforcement case has now been closed and the complainant notified accordingly.</p>
<p><b>Stage 1</b> - Planning - Concerns about the need for an ecology survey to be carried out for a retrospective application</p>	<p>Aug 2025</p>	<p><b>Complaint not upheld.</b> Even though the application was submitted retrospectively, bats are protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Government guidance in Circular 06/2005 states that it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making decision. Based on recent information from applicant, the ecologist confirmed they were content not to have a formal ecology survey completed.</p>

1.4 The Stage 2 complaint above relates to a Stage 1 complaint dating back to 2023. The complainant referred the matter to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) in May 2025, and we are currently awaiting their draft decision.

1.5 A total of 49 compliments have been received between the period 18 February 2025 and 31 October 2025. These compliments relate to work carried out by staff throughout the Authority, although tend to be categorised under Access & Recreation, Planning and the National Park Centres.

**Ben Barrett**  
**Head of Enterprise and Operations**  
**November 2025**