



EXMOOR

NATIONAL PARK

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
EXMOOR HOUSE, DULVERTON
SOMERSET TA22 9HL
TEL: (01398) 323665
FAX: (01398) 323150
E-mail: info@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk
www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

20th November 2025

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, 2nd December 2025 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 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 Committees@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 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).

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](#).

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in relation to items on the agenda for this meeting.

3. Chairperson's Announcements

4. Minutes (1) To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 4th November 2025 (Item 4).

(2) To consider any Matters Arising from those Minutes.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Corporate Plan Progress: To consider the report of the Chief Executive (Item 7)

8. Estates Annual Review: To consider the report of the Head of Conservation and Access (Item 8)

9. Personnel Update:

Starters: 01/12/2025 – Zara Blackmore – Estates Management Officer

Leavers: None

10. Members' Reports: To receive any updates and reports on meetings or events attended by Members as representatives of Exmoor National Park Authority.

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 the 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, 4th November 2025 at 10.00am in the Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton.

PRESENT

Miss A V Davis (Chairperson)

Mr R Milton (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr A Bray	Mrs F Nicholson
Mr L Baker	Mr S J Pugsley
Mrs M Chilcott	Mr J Patrinos
Mr D Elson	Mrs F Smith
Mr W Geen	Miss E Stacey
Mr R Hopley	Mr N Thwaites
Dr M Kelly	Miss L. Williams
Mr M Kravis	

Apologies for absence were received from Mr T Butt Phillip, Mr M Ellicott, Mr J Holtom, Dr S Warren

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None

48. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Management Plan launch at Lynton Town Hall on 16th October went very well and with plenty of positive feedback and positive publicity. Members were impressed with the team effort from Exmoor staff to deliver this. 2 short presentations from the event were played again at the meeting.
- Huge achievement to deliver the Dark Skies Festival which had been a great success taken place 17th October – 2nd November, this had received a large amount of TV, radio and press coverage. The event will take place again on 16th October – 1st November 2026.
- Chairman of National Parks England had met with Officers recently and visited Exmoor to view various sites.
- Planning Team were congratulated on its achievements during challenging times, particularly in processing 99% of all applications within statutory timescales. They were formally thanked for all their efforts.

49. MINUTES

- Confirmation:** The **Minutes** of the Authority's meeting held on 7 October 2025 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
- Matters arising:** PG3 – Rights of Way. Members had been sent an update from Officers; it was suggested this could be communicated onto landowners.

50. BUSINESS OF URGENCY: None.

51. PUBLIC SPEAKING: There were no public speakers.

52. REVISED MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2025/26 TO 2029/30 AND REVISED BUDGET: The Authority considered the **report** of the Chief Finance Officer.

The Authority's Consideration

A comprehensive suite of reports and appendices were tabled. These built on budget updates delivered in May, and to provide a revised medium term financial plan 2025/26 to 2029/30 and revised budget, as part of the 6-month financial performance review. This includes updates relating to the Capital Programme, Partnerships, Reserves, review of the exceptional Capital spend and allocation and updated financial plan.

The key points from this are:

- Grant reduction of 8.2% in RDEL resources had been offset by capital allocation with a revised budget of £6.1 million, we are meeting statutory requirements for a balanced budget.
- Majority of management accounts variances to Month 6 were timing issues related to budget phasing and the receipt of external income (Countryside Stewardship and Grant Returns) and new finance systems. Large increase in project activity such as the Exmoor Heartlands Landscape recovery project and the Exmoor Pioneers Heritage Lottery Funded Project.
- Capital Programme spend – at the May Authority meeting, a set of 25 schemes were approved which met Defra objectives. This is a substantial body of work to deliver in addition to ongoing activity. Increasing risks that some may not be delivered by 31st March 2026, coupled with uncertainty of future funding. A set of alternative Capital Projects were detailed seeking approval for these if there was any underspend in the Capital Allocation in 2025/26 and to enable swift project planning if new capital allocations were made for 2026/27.
- Breakdown of reserves of £550K, with a projected balance of £3.2million, and a realistic and robust overall budget. Reserves were assessed and deemed adequate at this time, resourcing is in place to prepare for challenges ahead, as well as monitoring savings and income opportunities where they arise.
- Medium term financial plan has an increase of £130k deficit projected for 2026/27 which increases through the later years of the plan, unfortunately this is inevitable with rising running costs due to a number of factors including continuing real terms cuts in the revenue element of national Park Grant, inflation and staffing costs which are expected to increase by around 3% year on year, staffing budgets are profiled as part of projections. Exmoor is in a relatively good position in comparison with other National Park. Risks are mitigated with strong strategies in place from Income Generation and Estates Management.

Members welcomed the reports and updates, raising the following points:

- Members thanked officers for their hard work and unprecedented challenges to manage short term spend on the Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (CDEL) projects. Officers agreed that this uncertainty was difficult to manage, and the recent staff survey had highlighted how staff capacity is increasingly stretched. However, the core aim continues to maintain operations with a strong corporate plan in line with Government agendas, long term projections may necessitate the need for another Business Review.

- The size and scale to deliver projects such as at the Driver site was acknowledged. It was confirmed that the current CDEL allocation cannot be carried across to a new financial year, and will be returned to DEFRA if not used. The Authority does have a reasonable level of Capital reserves which could be used to supplement activity if projects extend beyond the end of the current financial year. Officers had sought clarification on type of spend throughout this process with other National Parks, DEFRA, external auditors and CIPFA.
- It was hoped further news regarding grants will be heard by the end of 2025, and it was noted that all National Parks are in the same position. Officers would aim to give a breakdown of CDEL spending in December via email. It was suggested that grants and contributions income in the Medium Term Financial Plan be expanded to indicate the core elements received (e.g. grants received from applications, automatically given grants such as Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) and legacy income). Officers agreed to implement this.
- Projected income funding levels were confirmed to be assured with a 90% realistic assumption of delivery, with good signs for long-term trends from external income. Mitigation through use of reserves would take place if required.
- Challenges of DEFRA grants reducing from 75% to 50% of the Authority's total income over the last 5 years was raised, Officers were optimistic these were mitigated by increases from external income and the introduction of an Income Generation Strategy. Officers were asked to provide income and expenditure trends, plus data on reserves for the last 5 years. Officers explained that the new financial system enables better profiling of budgets to provide greater accuracy in management accounts. Monthly budget monitoring is an established process which involves Leadership Team and Delivery Team members.
- The impact of delayed Countryside Stewardship payments was noted but this was beyond control of Officers, however they were comfortable with how this affects cash flow.

RESOLVED:

- 1) NOTE the financial performance for the first six months of 2025/26 in section 2 and Appendix 1.
- 2) APPROVE the Revised Core, Capital and Programmes, Partnerships and Contributions to Reserves Budgets for 2025/26 as summarised in Appendices 2, 3 and 4.
- 3) NOTE the update to the approved Capital (CDEL) budget list at Appendix 4.
- 4) APPROVE the long list of additional Capital (CDEL) spend in 2025/26, and in 2026/27 if further DEFRA CDEL funding is allocated.
- 5) DELEGATE to the Chief Executive responsibility for allocating any CDEL underspend in 2025/26 to approved projects.
- 6) NOTE the position on reserves as detailed in Appendix 5.
- 7) ADOPT the attached Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2029/30 at Appendix 6.

- 53. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR REPORT :** The Authority considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer.

The Authority's Consideration

The meeting welcomed the report which is a statutory requirement to produce. Somerset Council (SC) is performing well with treasury activities and assume risk on behalf of ENPA. The report outlined investment activity and is a mid-year update.

Members were reassured by Officers that assurances had been taken from financial advisors at SC in line with policies.

RESOLVED: To NOTE the Treasury Management mid-year outturn for the first six months of 2025/26.

- 54. RISK MANAGEMENT** The Authority considered the report of the Head of Enterprise and Operations.

The Authority's Consideration

Following a review of Risk management arrangements in 2024, a suite of training sessions for Leadership and Delivery team along with other key staff members resulted in the publication of a new Risk Management Strategy and Policy document, along with resources and a comprehensive suite of policies for staff including the new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. Measures were now in place with robust structures in areas including Health and Safety quarterly meetings, Disaster recovery, Standards Committee, along with regular staff training and performance management.

- Members were impressed by the new plans and policies whilst noting the continued risks associated with declining DEFRA grants. Officers noted the mixture of risk appetite in different areas. Auditors would be reporting further in December 2025.
- There are plans to digitise historic paper archives, these are mostly held on the first floor of Exmoor House. Challenges from Cybers attacks, increase in risks involving A.I and social media, future pandemics, and policy changes from Government were all acknowledged as potential threats.
- It was noted that Appendix 2 and 3 are listed as confidential – this will be edited to remove this text as it is available for public consumption.
- It was suggested that the range of colour in the heatmaps could be streamlined.
- Officers noted that the project management framework was challenging to implement, seeking engagement from stakeholders is important and is embedded in delivery processes. Members thanked Officers for the robust strategy plans.

RESOLVED:

- 1) NOTE that the annual review of Risk Management is recommended to:
- 2) APPROVE the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy set out in Appendix 1
- 3) APPROVE the Risk Management Policy and Strategy contained in Appendix 2 and 3.

- 4) APPROVE the Strategic Risk Register and Risk Map set out in Appendices 4 and 5.
- 5) NOTE that the Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery Plan has been reviewed.

55. EXMOOR'S GOOD TOURISM PLAN

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

The Authority's Consideration

There is no single body responsible for Tourism on Exmoor, this plan had been produced building on foundations of the Strategic Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism and continued work with partners including Visit Exmoor. It builds on best practice and the success of the Covid Response and Recovery Plan, providing a basis for joint consideration, shared messages and collaboration rather than acting as a detailed action or delivery plan. It is not a consumer report for visitors.

The Authority has a statutory purpose to promote understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park and a duty in doing so to support objectives of socio-economic wellbeing. The plan reaffirms ENPA role within tourism on Exmoor.

The Exmoor Visitor Survey had been conducted between July 2024 and June 2025 and the infographic presented showed the key trends with an impressive 99% visitor satisfaction rate, with 88% planning to return.

- 3 Strategic Plan Objectives: Regenerative, Productive, Resilient. 5 principles of delivery: Care, Celebration, Communication, Collaboration and Coordination.
- Members were very happy with the visitor satisfaction survey scores and awareness of Exmoor National Parks. They acknowledged the importance and ambitions for tourism on Exmoor and were encouraged that this was actively supported. Officers advised that the top 3 reasons for visiting Exmoor are Landscapes, Tranquility and Wildlife. The effective use of social media, and photography used, was also recognised as an asset to promote and champion Exmoor. Officers confirmed that local photographers donate their images to a Library for organisations to use.
- Partners in the tourism sector could engage more with the public transport sector to encourage wider involvement, services have declined in recent years. Officers confirmed that the STEAM model set parameters of 3 hours or more on a leisure trip to define 'day visitors'. It was noted that visitors for country sports may have been missed within the survey due to the nature of their location.
- The risks and challenges of inflation, rising costs for businesses, changing trends to preference for self-catered accommodation, and reasons for visitor dis-satisfaction such as availability/charging for toilets were discussed.
- Members highlighted the need for better communication and education for safely visiting the countryside, Natural England could assist with promotion of this.
- Photos within the plan should have captions to put in location and context. There is a balance to be found and lessons to be learnt from other National Parks and sites outside the UK where over-tourism has had negative impacts and issues with capacity. Management of tourism with partners and stakeholders, along with spend and stay initiatives were encouraged. Officers

were confident that collaboration with local councils would continue to take place.

- Festivals and events such as the Dark Skies have been very successful in attracting visitors, particularly for overnight stays. Product development such as self guided Exmoor Explorer route walks and increase in the use of QR codes to encourage donations whilst managing busy 'honey-pot' sites such as Tarr Steps was noted.
- Members congratulated Officers on sharing and producing an impressive plan.

RESOLVED: To ENDORSE the shared Good Tourism Plan for Exmoor

Andrea Davis (Chair) left the meeting at 12.10. Robin Milton chaired the meeting for the final 5 minutes.

56. PERSONNEL UPDATE: The Authority noted the recent staff changes.

Thanks were given to all seasonal staff who had now finished at the National Park Centres for their successful input during 2025

57. MEMBERS' REPORTS:

Members acknowledged the impressive combined staff efforts at the launch of the Management Plan in Lynton on 16th October.

The meeting closed at 12.15pm

(Chairperson)

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 December 2025

PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING THE CORPORATE PLAN 2025-26

Report of the Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT: To inform Members of progress made in implementing the Corporate Plan 2025–26, from April to the end of September.

RECOMMENDATION: The Authority is recommended to:

- (1) NOTE the progress in implementing the Authority’s key commitments set out in the Corporate Plan as detailed in Appendix 1.
- (2) DELEGATE to the Chief Executive and Leadership Team further scrutiny of Authority performance across all the Corporate Plan actions for the next reporting period to 31 March 2026.

Authority Corporate Plan: The Corporate Strategy outlines the priorities for the Authority for 2023-2026 and includes actions for the period April 2025 to March 2026.

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). Engagement through the outreach work within the plan is designed to have a positive impact on protected groups.

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: No financial or risk implications have been identified.

Climate Change Response: Tackling the climate crisis is a Corporate Plan priority, and progress against actions identified are given below.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A three-year Corporate Strategy was agreed by the Authority in May 2023. This sets out the key priorities for the Authority and includes actions for 2025-26. It reflects the themes of the 2025-30 Exmoor National Park Management Plan, and the priorities around nature, climate and people identified in Government’s response to the Landscapes Review.

- 1.2 A new Corporate Strategy will be drafted and brought to Members in early 2026. This is likely to cover the period 2026-2030 to align with the new Management Plan.
- 1.3 Performance is monitored quarterly by Leadership Team to ensure that the actions within the Corporate Plan are being achieved and, if necessary, to provide an opportunity for resources to be re-allocated or to review the proposed action. This progress report provides an overview of key achievements between April and September 2025.
- 1.4 Overall, there have been significant achievements and good progress against delivery of the plan. This year there has been additional activity around management of the revenue budget, which was reduced by £263,443k and the delivery of £1,403,500 of additional capital funding. Notification of this allocation was received in early April, and budgets had to be realigned at that time.
- 1.5 The areas where there has been lack of delivery are largely due to staff capacity and difficulties spending additional capital in a short timescale.

2. Progress

- 2.1 Detailed updates are set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Performance has generally been excellent with good progress against the targets and priorities set out in the current Corporate Plan. Particular highlights this year have been the completion and launch of the new Exmoor National Park Management Plan for 2025-2030, commencing delivery of the Lottery funded Pioneers programme, continuing the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, developing the Exmoor Heartlands Landscape Recovery Bid and reaching close to 99% of planning applications assessed within time.
- 2.3 New areas of work have included air quality monitoring, pine marten reintroduction, developing plans for a replacement bridge at Hinds Pitt and running the Dulverton National Park Centre from Exmoor House. Ongoing day to day operations include managing the 1,000km Rights of Way network, overseeing management of the 4,700 hectare Estate, delivering the planning service, welcoming groups to Pinkery, and running volunteer and outreach programmes.
- 2.4 Development of new funding streams continues to be a priority with bids in development for the Lottery funded Landscape Connections programme and the development of an Income Generation Strategy.
- 2.5 Policy development has included strategies on Tourism, Volunteering, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and Communications.
- 2.6 In the corporate work of the Authority, new systems have been installed in both Development Management and Finance. Internal audit for 2024-25 has been completed with excellent results.
- 2.7 Analysis of the areas with less progress show that the expenditure of the Defra capital funds has been the most challenging. Staff capacity, licences and consents, procurement complexities, weather and contractor availability have caused delays in progress. Staff capacity has also limited progress in car free travel planning, development of the Climate Adaptation Plan and Management Plans for Conservation Areas. ENPA has no dedicated Climate Officer and existing staff are generally leading on the major capital projects alongside their normal work. There has been a delay on the White-Tailed Eagles reintroductions due to licensing issues in Scotland in 2025.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 Overall progress has been exceptionally good across the range of work of the Authority. The second half of the year is likely to be more challenging with additional pressure to spend the current CDEL funds by the end of March 2026. At the time of writing the future capital and revenue budgets for 2026 and beyond are unknown but it is anticipated that further pressures on budgets and staff capacity are likely.

Sarah Bryan
Chief Executive
November 2025

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:

Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2025-26

Delivery of ENPA Corporate Plan Actions 1st April to 30th September 2025

Cross Cutting Actions

1. **Priority action:** Review consultation responses, revise the draft Partnership Plan, and adopt the final Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2025-2030 at the Authority meeting in July 2025. Prepare Delivery Plans with partners and begin implementation. Establish a monitoring and reporting process for the 5-year Plan period.
 - ✓ *The National Park Partnership Plan was formally adopted by the Authority in July. It will be launched at an event in October. A summary document is being produced and webpages with the Plan content created. Autumn meetings of the Partnership Plan groups will discuss the Delivery Plans and ongoing monitoring.*
2. **Priority action:** Commence delivery of the 5-year Lottery funded Pioneers programme, covering: nature enhancement, heritage at risk, an extensive engagement/learning programme and a skills programme.
 - ✓ *The Pioneers programme is well underway with various events carried out, project programmes well developed and several claims to other funders completed. The first report to the National Lottery Heritage Fund has been submitted and grant monies paid out as per the programme timetable.*
3. **Priority action:** Deliver the Farming in Protected Landscapes 2025/26 programme.
Target: allocate £520k in 2025/26.
 - ✓ *£278k allocated by end of September - this represents just over 50% of the budget within 6 months.*
4. **Priority action:** Deliver strategy for income generation. Maintain the project pipeline for external project funding and publish a revised prospectus while pursuing funding opportunities.
 - ✓ *Strategy drafted and tabled for Member approval at October Authority meeting. Once approved Officers will work up business plans for relevant areas. Landscapes Connection Lottery funded EOI approved for River Barle works, with stage 1 application in development.*
5. **Priority action:** Complete second year of development phase of the 'Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands' Landscape Recovery programme including land management plan, finance plan, governance arrangements and contracts.
 - ✓ *Progress continues with outputs over the quarter including surveying the 7,000-hectare moorland SSSI, completing an AI-based habitat baseline to complement the survey data, refining project proposals through farm advice meetings, drafting Deer Management and Site Access Plans, procuring a legal advisor, and agreeing to a 3-month extension within the current budget.*
6. **Priority action:** Progress building restoration and land management plans for Driver.
 - ≠ *House refurbishment work has been delayed due to issues with the technical specification and complexities of project planning.*
 - ✓ *The modern barn has been demolished. A concept proposal has been developed for the west barn, parking area, campsite and toilets.*

Corporate Priority 1: A clear response to the nature and climate crises

7. Assist lead authorities in completion of any outstanding tasks to ensure successful launch of Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
 - ✓ *Both Devon and Somerset LNRS's have been approved by ENPA, as supporting Authority, for public consultation. Both strategies are now in public consultation, following feedback from Authority Members.*
8. Develop plans for ENPA Estate within the National Trust Holnicote Landscapes Recovery project.
 - ✓ *ENPA proposals on woodland management, heathland management, access and engagement with the historic environment on the ENPA estate have been submitted for the assurance process as part of the overall project.*
9. Develop and submit ideas for a joint National Lottery Landscape Connections bid with the National Trust on the coast and the Barle valley.
 - ✓ *The National Lottery approved the initial Expression of Interest to be worked up into a formal proposal for development funding over the next year. The work to develop the proposal is unfunded.*
10. Complete Air Quality Management Strategy. Look at ways to implement and fund the strategy.
 - ✓ *Final drafts of the Air Quality Evidence report and Strategy are awaiting comments from Natural England before being signed off. Plans for local monitoring are being progressed.*
11. Deliver further year of the Sowing the Seeds project. **Target:** restore 200ha of grassland, engage with 10 landowners and train 20 meadow owners.
 - ✓ *Continuing with surveys including 53 hectares of meadows in restoration at Driver. Harvested, dried and processed wildflower seed from 3 species rich meadows on 3 holdings. 156 kg harvested this year. Carried out a grasslands workshop with participant in Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands project.*
12. Work with partners to progress species recovery including pine marten, beaver, white-tailed eagle, marsh fritillary and water vole. Scope the development of a species recovery plan.
 - ✓ *In September the Two Moors Pine Marten Project released 19 pine martens from soft release pens in ENPA and National Trust woodlands which are now being tracked.*
 - ≠ *A feasibility study and licence application were submitted to Natural England and are pending, following NatureScot's decision not to issue further licences for White Tailed Eagle translocations this year. Project staff continue stakeholder engagement, including with the NFU.*
 - ✓ *NT has applied for a licence to release beavers at Holnicote and is awaiting a decision. Derek Gow consultants conducted a feasibility study for releasing water voles on ENPA land, and habitat assessments for marsh fritillary are underway as part of the Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands scheme.*
13. Seek funding to further implement Exmoor Non-Native Invasive Species (ENNIS) Project.
 - ✓ *ENPA has funded a further year of Japanese Knotweed treatment covering 70% of known sites using the project reserve and in house staff. Much of the administrative burden is in seeking permission from each landowner for the given year. No further reserve remains for future years.*
14. Work with Natural England on SSSI monitoring programme.

- ✓ *As per Action 5, the SSSI survey has been completed for the 7,000 hectare area of moorland within the Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands project area. The survey meets the condition assessment criteria and was part funded by the Natural England national team.*
- 15. Explore peatland restoration opportunities via Exmoor's Heartlands Landscape Recovery project and Exmoor Pioneers.
 - ✓ *Initial areas for restoration have been identified. South West Peatland Partnership is working up a costed proposals for one of the areas to inform development of the Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands blended finance plan.*
- 16. Deliver national ambitions for expansion of tree and woodland cover including delivery of 'Exmoor's Temperate Rainforest' project in combes around Simonsbath and Exmoor Forest.
 - ✓ *Potential Temperate Rainforest identified as part of Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands project (all to be agreed) plus additional areas of wood-pasture and scattered trees and scrub on ENPA land. Exmoor Woodland Futures/Woodland Strategy project let to Land Use Consultants and work underway. No further progress on private land since Treescapes Officer post ended.*
- 17. Update ENPA Climate Action Plan for 2025-2030 and continue to deliver actions.
 - ✓ *A report was taken to the July Authority meeting with updated actions for the Authority during 2025/26.*
- 18. Develop an action plan for Race to Zero by end of Q1. Complete annual report by end of Q2.
 - ✓ *Annual submission to Race to Zero completed end of September.*
 - ≠ *Further progress is being hindered by limited capacity and no dedicated Climate Change Officer role.*
- 19. **Priority Action:** Commission a climate adaptation and risk assessment for Exmoor National Park to feed into the Partnership Plan delivery and action planning.
 - ✓ *Further scoping work has taken place including discussions with the new Landscape Observatory regarding climate adaptive planning, and Dartmoor National Park Authority who are undertaking a similar climate adaptation and risk assessment.*
 - ≠ *Further progress is being hindered by limited capacity and no dedicated Climate Change Officer role.*

Corporate Priority 2: A welcoming place for all, improving people's health & well-being

- 20. Develop and recruit a Youth Voice board.
 - ✓ *Youth Board paper taken to Members and approved. Initial recruitment will be through the EDI Working Group which will help develop the Youth Board fully, for implementation during 2026/27.*
- 21. Adopt and deliver a volunteer strategy to promote and support a wide range of volunteering opportunities within Exmoor.
 - ✓ *Volunteer upskilling has included first aid, wildflower and bee ID, and inductions for regular volunteers and Young Rangers (YRs), who have also supported events to build confidence. The Ashcombe group is growing, with extra activity days added, and the tree nursery now has a regular team for seed collection and tree care. Many volunteers are self-led, contributing to signpost upkeep, path maintenance, guided walks, species*

monitoring, and literature delivery. ENPA has been invited to join English Heritage's Affiliated Partnership Scheme in recognition of volunteers' efforts in Dunster.

22. Promote the health and well-being benefits that Exmoor provides by working with partners to deliver the 'Nature prescriptions' project.
 - ✓ *The Nature Prescriptions Project continues through the work of our partners in the West Somerset Primary Care Network. Further discussions with colleagues in health sector (North Devon GP surgeries and Mental Health Team at Somerset NHS Foundation Trust) continue.*
23. Continue to maximise NPCs' contribution to National Park purposes and income generation. **Target:** 5% increase in net spend whilst maintaining 40% margins and continue to expand the Authority's online shop. **Target:** 5% increase in gross profit year on year.
 - ✓ *Biggest footfall decline (as expected) at Dulverton, but higher proportion of spend retained than originally forecast.*
 - ≠ *Overall, year to date footfall is down 11% (in line with the experiences of many others locally) and a reduction in spend of 2.5%. While this is below target it is showing a positive increase in spend per head.*
24. **Priority action:** Maintain a safe rights of way and access network with resources focused on the most popular routes. **Target:** open and easy to use score above 80%.
 - ✓ *The Field Service Team completed all scheduled vegetation cuts this quarter, keeping up with a strong growing season, leading to a reduction in complaints. FST made good progress with rights of way furniture works backlog, despite many days lost dealing with a smouldering ground fire in our woodland on North Hill. Rangers and our volunteer Pathwatchers, began path inspections for the 2025/26 season.*
25. Complete Exmoor Active Travel Plan and explore opportunities to fund implementation.
 - ✓ *Positive news has been received from Active Travel England which is offering funding for next year to further develop plans into 'shovel ready' projects. Assuming the bid is successful, this will be used to develop the Active Travel Plan themes into detailed design. Village audits are being carried out in Porlock, Dulverton and Dunster as part of the original funded work and this will be complete in Q3.*
26. Deliver year 3 of Defra Access for All funding to improve disability access infrastructure
 - ✓ *A programme of works has been developed, and the Exmoor Local Access Forum has been consulted on this plan. Works are under way to deliver the plan with the aim to complete before Christmas 2025.*
27. Scope works needed to replace Hinds Pitt Bridge on the Tarr Steps Circuit.
 - ✓ *Landowner discussions are continuing and need to be completed before any detailed design work can begin. Maintaining signage on site and putting plans in place in the event of Tarr Steps being unavailable for walkers.*
28. Work with Visit Exmoor to maximise benefits to Exmoor through involvement in Somerset & Exmoor and Devon + Partners Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEP).
 - ✓ *Regenerative tourism workshop led by ENPA and DNPA for Devon LVEP. Somerset plans still emerging. Resourcing continues to hinder further progress with the LVEPs.*
29. Work with the Exmoor Tourism Network to deliver ambitions outlined in the shared Good Tourism Plan for Exmoor. Manage a tourism challenge fund to support partners in delivering against the plan.

- ✓ *Plan drafted and partners have been engaged and consulted for Authority adoption in November ahead of launch. Challenge fund to remain under review and a decision made on approval of plan.*
- 30. Finalise Exmoor Visitor Survey data collection (Q1) and publish results (Q2).
 - ✓ *Data collection completed and results published.*
- 31. Deliver inaugural Exmoor Nature Festival in May and evaluate long term feasibility.
 - ✓ *Successfully delivered.*
- 32. **New Action:** Explore opportunities to further promote car free travel within and to the National Park.
 - ≠ *Limited progress due to lack of resources and opportunities. Awaiting news of any potential coastal service for 2026 – a number of issues reported with this year’s Exmoor Explorer service.*

Corporate Priority 3: A cared for landscape and heritage

- 33. Continue the restoration of Ashcombe Gardens.
 - ✓ *Works to rebuild/repair the leat and main garden path which runs beside the leat have been completed. The weir, which supplies the leat, at the top of the gardens has also been repaired. Access to the gardens has been postponed until spring 2026.*
- 34. Engage people in Exmoor’s dark skies through delivery of the 2025 Dark Skies Festival.
 - ✓ *Programme published with over 60 events.*
- 35. Draft and consult on a Design Planning Document to encourage high quality, locally distinctive design and take account of national design guidance.
 - ✓ *Work continuing draft document.*
- 36. Produce Management Plans for all Conservation Areas including public consultation. Investigate potential for small scale improvement schemes.
 - ≠ *On-going-further site appraisals carried out and drafts being produced. Progress slowed by other work priorities.*
- 37. Enhance engagement with the Historic Environment Record (HER).
 - ✓ *5-year development plan for HER being drafted; secured Forestry Commission funding for Selected Heritage Inventory for Natural England (SHINE) coverage enhancement.*

Corporate Priority 4: A place with flourishing, vibrant, communities and businesses

- 38. Support businesses and partners to deliver the Rural Enterprise Exmoor vision.
 - ✓ *Planning well advanced for annual REE day in November.*
- 39. Promote philanthropic giving via CareMoor for Exmoor with a focus on promoting legacy opportunities. **Target:** Increase general donations (excluding large gifts over £1,000) by 5% above 2024/25 figures.
 - ✓ *New campaigns under development. New Parkland Tree sponsorship opportunity launched. Donate a fingerpost continues to be popular alongside existing schemes. Eat Cake For CareMoor developed as a one-off promotion linked to Exmoor Day with 10+ local businesses supporting.*
- 40. Work with partners to support increased use and promotion of local produce including further roll out of Eat Exmoor branding.

- ✓ *Ongoing - links with Exmoor Day / CareMoor 'Eat Cake for Exmoor' campaign.*
- 41. Prepare for the review of the Local Plan.
 - ✓ *Ongoing preparation for the Local Plan review including preparation of evidence and input from colleagues. Awaiting confirmation of new plan-making system and draft national development management policies.*
- 42. Implement transfer to a new planning database.
 - ✓ *Progress being made with uploading data to the new system, with mapping process commenced. Template documents being prepared ready for new system.*
- 43. Consult on and adopt updated local list of requirements for validating planning.
 - ✓ *Draft document approved by Planning Committee in September. This is now subject to consultation (15 Sept to 10 Nov).*

Corporate Priority 5: A highly performing Estate, delivering National Park purposes

- 44. **Priority action:** Progress the ENPA Estate Strategy with a particular focus on completing baseline surveys and preparing management plans for priority land assets (those in Landscape Recovery).
 - ✓ *Work has continued on completing the baseline surveys.*
 - ≠ *This is behind schedule, but work has focused on high level management plans for land being entered for LRS.*
- 45. Continue management of ENPA woodland estate and develop the tree nursery. Progress timber sales **Target:** £14,000 in 2025/26.
 - ✓ *Open space and ride management completed, rhododendron control on North Hill completed, winter program being finalised to include invasive species and scrub control, coppicing, Moor Wood and Yarner thinning. Additional tools and equipment acquired for nursery via Forestry Commission and Pioneers. 10,000 seeds collected in 2025.*
 - ≠ *Timber sales likely to fall short.*
- 46. Continue management of the Authority's Exmoor pony herds.
 - ✓ *Day to day management continuing. The new stallion has settled well at Haddon and foals should appear in April 2026. Continuing to work with Moorland Mousie Trust to promote the breed, as well as taking sales enquiries for next year's crop of geldings. North Hill and Pinkery herds are all in good health. The ponies in the Sowing the Seeds project are also delivering a good result. In the next quarter plans will commence to renew the handling facilities at Haddon.*

Corporate Priority 6: A great organisation to work for

- 47. Review and update Organisational Development Strategy.
 - ✓ *Appraisals have now been completed and a staff survey undertaken. The results are being prepared to present to LTDT in Quarter 3. Preparation is also underway to develop training plans and review the appraisal process with staff.*
- 48. **Priority action:** Take positive action to support the Authority's commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Adopt an EDI strategy and develop actions to ensure EDI is embedded into our work.
 - ✓ *The EDI Oversight Group met to discuss the Strategy and Member training. This included an insightful session learning from the experience of someone who is autistic.*

The EDI Strategy has now been adopted. Preparation is underway to set up a Women's Forum.

49. **New Action:** Implement new Communications Strategy.

✓ *Strategy adopted.*

50. Fully integrate Risk Management with Performance Management.

✓ *Leadership Team discussion on the Strategic Risk Register in September 2025. Working with project managers on embedding risk management into project management processes.*

51. Develop use of innovative GIS and AI tools in project and service delivery.

✓ *Continuing to use ESRI Field Maps for surveys and using AI tools developed by Cranfield University/Peak District for depicting the 3rd iteration of Land Cover mapping. Exmoor is one of the first tranche of National Park and National Landscapes engaged with the new landscape Observatory and Cranfield University working on remote sensing and AI habitat mapping.*

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 December 2025

ANNUAL ESTATE REVIEW

Report of the Head of Access, Engagement and Estates

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

- (1) Provide update on the management of the Authority's estate for 2025
- (2) Look ahead to projects and works planned 2026

RECOMMENDATION: The Authority is asked to NOTE the content of the Estate Review.

Authority Priority: Corporate Plan Priority 5: A highly performing Estate, delivering National Park Purposes.

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

Equality Implications: The equality impact of the recommendation(s) of this report has been assessed as follows:

- No disadvantage will be incurred as a result of belonging to a protected group as defined within the Equality Act 2010
- The recommendations have no implications under the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998

Financial and Risk Implications: The financial and risk implications of the recommendation(s) of this report have been assessed as follows:

- Financial: None
- Risk: None

Climate Change Response: There are considered to be no impacts from this paper on climate change mitigation.

Exmoor National Park Authority

Annual Estate Review

1. Introduction

This document presents Members with an overview of activities undertaken across the ENPA estate during 2025, emphasising notable achievements and key milestones. Additionally, it outlines our strategic objectives for 2026 and details the primary elements of our work plan.

2. Strategic Purpose

The Estate Strategy 2023-2043 was approved by Members in 2023. An extract from the Strategy (*Mission Statement – ENPA Estate*) follows and provides the context for this paper.

Our strategy ensures that:

ENPA's estate will continue to provide public benefits for all. We will be both ambitious and aspirational in what our estate can achieve in the future. It will be an exemplar and a leader in the countryside. It will continue to be well managed, but in the years to come will be economically sustainable and more innovative. It will always be a place of inspiration, with a warm welcome for everyone.

Through ENPA's ownership, we will work harder to protect and nurture the environment, making it much more resilient in the future. We will care for the social, cultural, historical and economic attributes of the land and properties we own.

Through the estate we will continually provide inspiration, re-creation, wellbeing and understanding for generations now and into the future

3. Estate Summary

Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) owns just under 7% of the National Park's total surface area, which mainly consists of open moorland and 553 hectares of woodland. In total, the estate covers 4,671 hectares (11,542 acres), and features a diverse range of buildings, including its headquarters (Exmoor House), National Park Centres, a depot at Exford, an outdoor education centre at Pinkery, a historic farmstead, a campsite, and public toilets located in car parks. The estate also contains various historic assets, ruined buildings, and multiple ancillary properties. ENPA currently generates an annual income of approximately £400,000 from a combination of rent (about £200,000), grants such as agri-environment schemes, and other contributions. The woodland estate provides additional income as well but is not the main subject of this paper; it will be the subject of an update early in 2026.

4. Review of 2025

There follows a review of 2025 which we have divided into the following business areas:

1. Land Management
2. Commercial Tenancies
3. Additional Income
4. Capital Works and Large-Scale Repairs
5. Operational Assets

4.1 Land Management

Nature recovery work across our estate has been a key priority for 2025 and will remain a primary objective moving forward. Some highlights of key work areas follow.

4.1.1 Holnicote Rivers Landscape Recovery Scheme

The deadline for the Holnicote Rivers Landscape Recovery Scheme application was August 2025; this was achieved in collaboration with the lead partner (National Trust) and Porlock Manor Estate.

The land at North Hill, which is currently in a Countryside Stewardship Scheme was submitted as part of the LRS application and provided an opportunity to realise further nature recovery ambitions for this important coastal habitat.

The ENPA submission also incorporated our woodlands at Culbone, Hawkcombe, and Colescombe, collectively accounting for over 50% of our woodland estate. Ambitious woodland initiatives, encompassing both operational tasks and capital items, were included that presently fall outside the scope of existing agreements.

In addition to the land management proposals that we submitted as part of the LRS application, a special focus has been placed on Culbone Woods. ENPA cares for these much-loved coastal woodlands leading from Worthy to Culbone Church. This is a place where nature and history entwine in a remarkable Picturesque landscape, designed by one of the greatest mathematicians and forward thinkers of the 19th century, Ada Lovelace (1815-1852). Ada and her husband created a landscape of terraced paths and little buildings, and Ada's letters show her delight in sharing the resulting woodland experience with her guests. As well as opening up one of the original rides through the woods, a digital visualisation of the gardens will enable people to experience this extraordinary place remotely.

The Holnicote Rivers LRS is currently being assessed by Defra. Early indications are positive, and we hope to receive a determination during spring 2026.

4.1.2 Reviving Exmoor Heartlands Landscape Recovery Scheme

In 2025 the Authority secured funding for the Reviving Exmoor Heartlands Landscape Recovery Scheme Development phase. The Scheme has a number of participants and is focused on the central part of the former royal forest around Simonsbath, stretching northwards across Brendon Common and into the Brendon valley. We have entered 3,740 hectares (9,242 acres) of ENPA owned land into this phase, comprising both tenanted land (2,998 ha) and in-hand land (742 ha). Throughout 2025, significant workstreams have been delivered across the land entered for the Scheme and a decision on the delivery phase will be made by Defra during 2026.

4.1.3 Driver Land

Driver has been a major focus throughout 2025, and it will remain a key objective going forward. While capital works are detailed elsewhere in this document, our main land management activity this year has involved planning and implementing a fencing program which will secure the external boundary. Additionally, some new sections will replace existing dilapidated internal boundaries, designed to support meadow restoration and establish wildlife corridors. We are utilising estate produced chestnut stakes for significant runs of the fencing including the roadside boundaries.

To minimise the replacement of internal boundaries, we have conducted research and testing to identify an alternative to currently used cattle collars. We have now identified an alternative which will offer improved functionality and reliability. The

availability of capital funding this year will enable the purchase of 65 collars; these will be used by our grazier to target grazing pressure on key areas.

4.1.4 Larkbarrow

During 2025 we were successful in securing a Conservation and Enhancement Scheme (CES) Agreement with Natural England for our land at Larkbarrow. The grant will support the purchase of 40 cattle collars with an 80% contribution from Natural England. Larkbarrow forms a part of the North Exmoor SSSI which is nationally important for its large areas of heathland, moorland, mires and sessile oak woodland, together with many associated habitats such as scrub, acidic grassland, bracken slopes. The use of collars will ensure that the cattle can be placed in compartments to tackle areas that the cattle tend to avoid and will therefore effectively focus grazing.

4.2 Commercial Tenancies

During 2025, we welcomed new tenants and held renewal talks with existing tenants for our commercial premises. Key transactions in this period include:

4.2.1 7-9 Fore Street

The recent relocation of the Dulverton National Park Centre to Exmoor House presented an opportunity to secure a new tenant for 7-9 Fore Street. After a marketing campaign we were pleased to offer the tenancy to 'Mollies Makings', providing a shopfront in the centre of Dulverton for a range of local producers.

4.2.2 North Hill Campsite

The long-term tenants at North Hill Camp Site served notice during 2024. We therefore had a rare opportunity to repurpose the site and seek a new partner. Our ambition for the campsite was to broaden the previous offer and target new audiences.

The response from the market to our offer at Moor Wood was extremely positive with over 100 initial enquires, and 30 subsequent expressions of interest/draft business plans. Following further process with extensive evaluation and discussion, we were able to offer the campsite to a couple based on their vision for the site, the robustness of their business plan and their enthusiasm for Moor Wood. The campsite subsequently reopened in summer 2025 with an expanded and revitalised offer, receiving highly positive feedback from customers.

4.2.3 Simonsbath Sawmill

Our tenants at Simonsbath Sawmill are approaching the end of their initial tenancy agreement. Their occupancy has been successful for both parties, and we have begun discussions over a new tenancy agreement. We are also investing further in the premises - the enhancements are intended to support our tenants' business growth, including traineeships through the Pioneers Project, and to add value to our asset.

4.3 Additional income & Activity

We have an ongoing commitment to seek additional income from the estate and broaden the appeal. Examples of recent business areas include:

4.3.1 Licences

We regularly issued licences (with an agreed fee) throughout 2025 for large outdoor activity events including mountain biking and endurance activities. We also advertised and issued Catering Concessions at several of our sites, including

Blackmoor Gate, and more recently at Haddon Hill car park where the operator is offering early morning hot refreshments to dog walkers.

4.3.2 Bothy Accommodation

We are in the process of finalising our designs and business cases for both The Pound and the North Hill WWII Radar Station bothy conversions. We anticipate submitting a planning application for the Radar Station in early 2026. In the meantime, we continue to work with our ecological consultants to further develop our plans for The Pound, with particular focus on bat mitigation strategies.

4.3.3 The British Exploring Society

During 2025, we have been working with the British Exploring Society to develop a partnership with ENPA. This emerging agreement will underpin regular expeditions and adventurous learning for young people from all backgrounds on ENPA land. While discussions are still ongoing, Driver (and Pinkery) are the likely expedition base camps.

4.4 Capital Works and Large-Scale Repairs

Given the complexities of our estate together we have been faced with several significant capital outlays during the review period. Notable projects include the following:

4.4.1 Driver

The refurbishment specification for the farmhouse, including the provision of off-grid services is being finalised with an anticipated commencement date on site of spring 2026.

We have developed detailed proposals for the adaptation of the west barn range, and these will be submitted for planning consent early in 2026.

The modern barn has been demolished, and we now have detailed plans for a planting scheme and informal parking to replace it. The scheme will be submitted for planning consent early in 2026.

Due to the increasing complexity of this project and our own limited staff capacity, we have appointed an external firm of consultants to lead on project management.

4.4.2 Pinkery Outdoor Education Centre

Earlier this year we obtained planning permission for both the roofing works and classroom adaptation. Since then, we have commissioned architectural services to develop drawings and tender documents ahead of beginning procurement. Currently, our focus has shifted whilst we address urgent repairs to the roof resulting from storm damage. Other capital projects, including upgrades to the existing visitor reception area, are now scheduled to take place in the first quarter of 2026.

4.5 Operational

The Estates Department, in collaboration with other departments, has progressed some significant operational improvements during the review period. Notable projects include the following:

4.5.1 Exmoor House

In response to staff feedback, including insights from the recent staff survey, we have initiated the repurposing of vacant space within Exmoor House to enhance working conditions, the creation of additional communal areas and meeting rooms, as well as

the development of a new Common Room and Kitchen. These projects are currently underway and will be completed in early 2026.

4.5.2 The Pavilion, Lynmouth

During 2025, we successfully obtained planning permission for the installation of an external extraction system for the café, along with Listed Building Consent for the refurbishment of the adjacent lime kiln. A local specialist conservation contractor has been engaged to undertake the works on the lime kiln, with commencement scheduled for the end of 2025. Additional survey work is required for the extraction system prior to its installation.

Funds have been allocated to renovate the public toilet and washroom facilities at the Pavillion, and the procurement process is now in progress.

5. Priorities and Objectives for 2026

Looking ahead, to 2026 priorities include:

5.1 Land Management

Land management will remain a top priority in the upcoming review period, with particular emphasis on the Reviving Exmoor Heartlands Landscape Recovery Scheme which, subject to approval, will begin its 20-year delivery phase. We will focus on working collaboratively with tenants and graziers to develop individual tailored land management plans and reach consensus on necessary management interventions.

We expect Defra to make a determination regarding the success of the Holnicote Rivers Landscape Recovery Scheme, either in whole or in part, during the spring of 2026. Following this our attention will turn to developing workstreams to achieve our objectives for the Scheme.

We previously created a high-level Management Statement template to guide our strategic planning for individual assets or asset groups (this was identified in the Estate Strategy). However, in 2025, we moved away from using these proformas because our focus required more detailed analysis and insight into the two landscape recovery schemes areas. We intend to return to the management statement proformas after the Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands Landscape Recovery Scheme has been submitted and resources become available.

5.2 Capital Works and Large-Scale Repairs

The delivery of an ambitious capital works programme will continue to be a focus during 2026. Key projects are likely to include;

- The capital works at Driver will be progressed with a focus on the refurbishment of the farmhouse, the adaptive reuse of the west barn, parking areas, planting and renewable energy schemes.
- The capital improvements at Pinkery Outdoor Education Centre will be a priority to deliver during the first quarter of 2026.
- In 2025, we engaged an architect to develop plans for replacing the existing WW1-era barn at Blackpitts. Progress on the project was temporarily suspended due to the discovery of hibernating bats roosting in the chimneys, necessitating additional bat mitigation measures. Further ecological surveys are scheduled for December 2025 and January 2026, after which the project will proceed, and a planning application submitted accordingly.

- The proposed bothies at The Pound, Simonsbath and WWII Radar station will be progressed.

6. Summary & Conclusion

The estate has maintained strong momentum throughout 2025, resulting in considerable progress across the portfolio. Major advances have been made possible through significant capital investments directed towards key assets; these reinforce our commitment to long-term improvement and sustainability.

With up to 90% of the estate potentially transitioning to Landscape Recovery Schemes during 2026, there is a great opportunity for securing funding to deliver National Park purposes at scale over the next two decades. This period represents a pivotal moment for the estate.

Andrew Lawes
Estates Manager
November 2025