Dartmoor Farming in Protected Landscapes

Local Assessment Panel

Wednesday 4th February 2026

Attending: Russell Ashford, Alison Clish-Green, Shirley Mudge, James Wright, Katie Wynter, Sarah Blyth, Mark Williams, Christine Malseed, Ann Willcocks *(attending as the designated sub--representative for the DaCC)*, John Howell *(left for voting before the 5th and 6th applications)*

Dartmoor staff attending: Bea Dunscombe, Kaitlin Perryman

Apologies: Will Dracup, Dan Alford

Finance Update:

- The panel members gave their thanks and gratitude to the FiPL team for delivering the programme to date. Members expressed compliments to FiPL officers.
- Panel questioned the reference to larger projects that have been withdrawn at this late stage of the programme. FiPL team clarified that these projects hadn't been formally submitted and assessed, but they had been in our pipeline for a while and therefore their project costs have been considered in our approach to managing expectations of remaining budget. With these applications having been withdrawn, there is more funding available than planned at this stage.
- FiPL team clarified that this meeting sees 5 applications led by DNPA and that these projects are eligible and impactful for Dartmoor and that their benefits to the National Park are tangible, hence why they have been brought forward.
- It was noted that there are 5 DNPA applications in a row due to the remaining funding remaining at this late stage of the programme. The DNPA have never applied for FiPL funding over the entire 5 years of the programme so far, which is uncommon compared to other Protected Landscapes.
- FiPL team also flagged that only 1 DNPA application is over the £10,000 threshold and therefore would otherwise the remaining 4 would have typically been internally considered.
- Panel member noted that any grant unallocated would need to be sent back to DEFRA if not allocated on projects this financial year. With mind to supporting the Dartmoor community, members agreed they did not want to see this happen.
- Questions as to whether DNPA Authority member on the FiPL Panel could vote on the DNPA applications. It was confirmed not, as they are predisposed for those applications; they can therefore be present and listen, but not vote.

Applications

Buckfastleigh Moor Archaeology

(Presented by Bea Dunscombe)

Summary of application:

To carry out a visual Archaeological survey across Buckfastleigh Moor, in order to accurately capture and map its archaeological features. This will result in a written report.

Declarations of interest:

- Russell Ashford is commoner on Buckfasleigh Moor, but it was decided that he had no conflicting interest or financial gain to be had from this application.
- Mark Williams declared an interest as a DNPA Authority member. Confirmed that he will not vote.
- James Wright declared an interest as a DNPA staff member. Confirmed that he will not vote.

Discussion points:

- Panel questioned whether the survey would include a condition assessment? It was confirmed that it will.
- Farmer benefit was mentioned, as there is the potential for targeted grazing to me implemented regarding the preservation of archaeological features found on site.
- Panel queried the Application Costings Spreadsheet as it appeared the quote was not the same as the total cost. It was confirmed that this was an error and will be rectified.
- Panel agreed that information will need to feed into future ELMS, and that commoners will need to be on board in relation to targeting grazing
- Panel flagged that in the longer term it would be great to see community group involvement in projects like this on Dartmoor, e.g. surveying features alongside archaeologists. Potentially through the Dartmoor Preservation Association. It was confirmed that this work is quite specialist no might not be possible but is a good idea.
- Panel questioned why Buckfastleigh Common in particular, seeing as there are lots of commons with important archaeology on Dartmoor. Queried whether it would be appropriate for this to be addressed through a project condition?
- For DNPA FiPL applications going forward, there needs to be transparency regarding benefit to the Authority benefit.

- Panel flagged that the application also states, 'first time applicant'. This needs to be amended as there are a number of DNPA applications being considered in this Panel meeting. FiPL team agreed that this would be rectified.
- Panel discussed whether it should it be conditional that DNPA should be working more broadly with landowners to pursue applications for archaeological surveys on their land.
- It was decided that this is not appropriate as a condition because it would be very difficult for DNPA to meet this condition, as would need other landowners to come forward and apply for these projects. DNPA is applying for this project because it is on their land and they therefore have management control of it.
- Panel asked what the statuary role of DNPA regarding archaeological surveys on their land. It was confirmed that this goes above and beyond what is considered the Authority's core responsibility and obligation. It was also confirmed that the DNPA Archaeologist leading this project is a Historic England representative, and so this goes above and beyond their role as part of the Authority.

Scoring

The scoring by the FiPL team was confirmed:

	Score	Score after weighting
Project outcomes (Climate, Nature, People and Place) – 40%	8	3.2
Ability to deliver - 20%	10	2
Sustainability / legacy of projects - 20%	8	1.6
Value for Money - 20%	8	1.6
Total	34	8.4

Decision:

To approve this project subject to meeting the below condition:

- For Andy Crabb, DNPA Archaeologist, to confirm in writing (by email) that the Archaeological Survey goes above and beyond DNPA's statuary obligation as landowner of Buckfastleigh Common

The Panel also wanted to make the below recommendation:

- The DNPA should proactively engage with other Common landowners where similar survey work could be impactful.

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstained: 2

Holne Moor Archaeology Preservation

(Presented by Kaitlin Perryman)

Summary of application:

This project aims to conserve and protect 5 areas of archaeological significance on Holne Moor, where gorse and encroaching scrub have made many sections of the common inaccessible to people and livestock, threatening the condition of 3 Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Declarations of interest:

- Mark Williams declared an interest as a DNPA Authority member. Confirmed that he will not vote.
- James Wright declared an interest as a DNPA staff member. Confirmed that he will not vote.
- Shirley Mudge is the Chair of Holne Commoners Association but has no financial gain from this project. It was decided she could vote on this application.
- Ann Wilcocks is the Secretary of Holne Commoners Association but has no financial gain from this project. It was decided she could vote on this application.

Discussion points:

- The Panel queried the reference to the 'Dartmeet coaxial field system' mentioned in the Historic England listing for the site due to its location away from Holne Common. It was confirmed that the listing covered a large area and is named Dartmeet but covers this side of the valley as well.
- Members questioned the longevity of the vegetation clearance and asked how quickly will it regrow and when will it need to be done again? It was confirmed that the maintenance conducted on the volunteer days and the grazing offered by livestock who will graze the young fresh gorse which will help to keep the project work maintained within the 5-year terms.
- There were mentions of the further utilisation of volunteers, such as those in the Dartmoor Preservation Association. It was discussed that they were approached regarding this work, but their lack of response demonstrated their lack of capacity.
- It was discussed that there is also a separate broader piece of work coming from DNPA about what and where the volunteering opportunities there are across Dartmoor going forward.
- One of the selling points of the application is opening it up to walkers and riders, will this lead to erosion and has this been considered? Is this likely and what will be done if this happens? Confirmed that this project is just emergency clearance of small sections of vegetation clearance. Erosion will therefore be minimal along the

features. The DNPA Archaeologist supports this method of maintenance to reveal and understand the state of SAM features.

- Members questioned if there is reave clearance including in the application? As this is emergence time for adders who like to hibernate in reaves, members recommended should include a methodology to ensure no one is bitten by adders or disrupts their nests. Confirmation that DNPA Ecologist should go to the site and o a methodology and risk assessment to ensure public safety. And that reeve clearance is included in the application.
- Members sought further clarification on whether the Holne commoners were informed and on board with the work.
- The Panel members understood the tight timeframe at this stage in the programme, but reinforced the need and benefit of multiple comparative quotes. It was confirmed that multiple quotes were sought, but other contractors were unavailable. There is also a CS rate, but it isn't totally transferable to this works specification, but this could be used if needed. Advisor to update the costings spreadsheet with these comparative quotes.
- Members raised that commoners have tried hard over the years to do this work with support from their HLS Agreements. It was therefore questioned if this work is appropriate to be funded through FiPL was raised. Does this count as double funding?
- It was noted that the commoners work alongside Natural England complete this sort of work, but due to constraints by the landowners they are unable to achieve their goals.
- Members asked after consent for work to be completed on the SSSI. Would this also need an MTA and a site works plan? These pieces may be difficult to obtain in the tight timeframe.
- The contractor was endorsed, but in the future Holne Commoners would again like to be approached in the first instance.
- What is happening to the cut off material – gorse and bracken – it was explained that gorse cannot be removed due to bylaws? Can gorse be burnt? As it will soon be swaling season. It was confirmed that cut material can't be burnt on common land nor on DNPA owned land.
- Confirmed that there is an ancient common right that black sticks can't be removed from the common.
- Confirmed that Dartmoor the Youth Rangers volunteers will maintain this work going forward. It was again reiterated that livestock will also help to keep regrowth down.
- It was questioned to whether where the work proposes to clear along boundaries, will this attract increased footfall? Could this go into a larger scrub control plan? Confirmed that locations have been chosen based on archaeological features – and

therefore this project is about protecting those features to allow for future work to be undertaken.

- Could cutting be wider to stop erosion and spread footfall? Could this be 4m in width which is in line with a fire break? Confirmed they will be up to 4 metres in width in some areas.
- Countered that 12m width would be needed to stop mass erosion in a confined space.
- Is there a risk of double funding this? As this work may be included in the commoners HLS.
- Confirmed that commoners are unable to do controlled burns up to the leat, and therefore the proposed cutting along the leat in this bid is eligible and runs no risk of double funding. Evidence of this is needed in writing from Natural England.
- Confirmation that this project was initially brought forward in conjunction with Holne Commoners, but there was not sufficient traction on who would do the work. Therefore, DNPA took the lead as landowner and became the applicant instead. IT was reiterated that Holne commoners were approached but were not available to do the work.
- Members raised that the 'HL10' is revenue payment and that capital work could be funded on top of that which would not be deemed double funding. Again confirmation on this is required. This could be a capital uplift project beyond what is covered in the commoners existing HLS.
- Members recommended that the relevant delegates meet, including Commoners, Natural England and FiPL, to ensure there is consensus on the work, methodology, to exclude the risk of double funding and whether material should be taken off site.
- Need formal landowner consent from the RSPB and assurance that they are on board with works taking place on their land.
- Proposal to remove work along the reaves be removed, which would negate the need for further landowner approval and any risk of double funding for this phase f the works. These features could then be reviewed next year separately, refined this project to the leat clearance work only.
- Communication between NE, Commoners, FiPL, Archaeologist regarding minor questions that need answering
- Members asked about potential signage about the archaeology and FiPL funded works to go in the Venford carpark? It was confirmed that QR codes have been mentioned before and this that piece of work is in the pipeline for the future.
- Members look forward to phase 2 and 3 but want to ensure everyone is onboard as above.

Scoring

The scoring by the FiPL team was confirmed:

	Score	Score after weighting
Project outcomes (Climate, Nature, People and Place) – 40%	6	2.4
Ability to deliver - 20%	8	1.6
Sustainability / legacy of projects - 20%	6	1.2
Value for Money - 20%	8	1.6
Total	28	6.8

Decision:

To approve this project subject to meeting the below conditions:

1. The vegetation clearance along the leat is the priority project area and this work should be focused on in the first instance. The other project areas need to be discussed with Natural England, Commoners and Landowners in order to find the right methodology for each location.
2. Natural England are to confirm is there is any risk of double funding between the HLS Agreement and FiPL bid.
3. Formal confirmation of permission to conduct work on RSBP land is required.
4. A re0fined methodology is to be shared with the panel after this meeting.

The Panel also wanted to make the below recommendation:

1. DNPA ecologist is to visit the site and complete a methodology and risk assessment to ensure public safety in relation to adders hibernating in the reaves.
2. FiPL Advisor is to update the Annex A costings with comparative quotes, using CS rate as a comparison if necessary.

For: **7**
Against: 0
Abstained:

People Counters for Visitor Management

(Presented by James Wright)

Summary of application:

This project will fund the procurement of people counters for 8 locations across the National Park to measure the number of people walking/running, cycling, and horse riding.

Declarations of interest:

- Mark Williams declared an interest as a DNPA Authority member. Confirmed that he will not vote.

- James Wright declared an interest as a DNPA staff member. Confirmed that he will not vote.

Discussion points:

- Will any further pieces of technology, such as software upgrades, be needed to support these new devices? Is it all aligned? FiPL team confirmed that the system is a cloud-based system and therefore no hard drives or upgrades to excising IT infrastructure will be required.
- Members quired the licensing and insurance aspect. Will these assets be covered by DNPA insurance? It was confirmed that yes these items will go on DNPA asset register, therefore if they are vandalised they will be covered.
- Will the chosen locations be managed in case of vegetation blocking or disrupting the laser signal? It was confirmed that the DNPA Rangers would be responsible for managing this moving forwards.
- What is the life span of the kit and does it meet the FiPL 5 year maintenance period? It was confirmed that the initial battery life is 3 to 4 years, whilst the whole kit is longer than that. Whilst the equipment hasn't been around with for decades, no issues flagged so far by other users about their longevity.
- Who will have access to the data and how could others access it? Some concerns were raised about GDPR, relating to the location of the sites and the landowners identifies. DNPA would have to ensure that if the data is available, then they are compliant with GDPR regulations.
- Could it be a condition that the data is available through the Dartmoor Observatory?
- Is this a capital purchase? It was confirmed yes, as a capital asset.
- Are there vandal resistant posts available?
- Question asked about the type of emitter/receiver and what form of it, as from experience, the model which had 2 boxes opposite each other work better than the ones which have a laser and a small hole. It has been found that solitary mining bees like to make their homes in the small hole, which can disturb the signal.
- Concerns over the warranty and functionality, as similar infrastructure has not lasted as well within the Parke. FiPL team reiterated how well utilised these models are with no issues flagged as to their functionality or longevity.
- How can the DNPA ensure the maintenance when the battery life is only 3-4 years. It was confirmed that the lithium battery can be replaced.
- Members raised concerns over livestock rubbing up against the post. Will appropriate infrastructure be installed to prevent this, such as the one installed at Redlake? Confirmed that similar work would be undertaken as the chosen locations to prevent against damage from livestock.

Scoring

The scoring by the FiPL team was confirmed:

	Score	Score after weighting
Project outcomes (Climate, Nature, People and Place) – 40%	8	3.2
Ability to deliver - 20%	8	1.6
Sustainability / legacy of projects - 20%	8	1.6
Value for Money - 20%	8	1.6
Total	32	8

Decision:

To approve this project subject to meeting the below condition:

1. The visitor data is available through the Dartmoor Observatory when this is fully functional, as long as the data released is in line with the appropriate GDPR regulations.

For: 8

Against:

Abstained:

Hawns and Dendles Grazing Management

(Presented by Bea Dunscombe)

Summary of application:

Install 3x pasture pump stations (2x pasture pumps at each station) to provide appropriate water supply for 12 head of cattle being used for conservation grazing at Dendles Waste.

Declarations of interest:

- Mark Williams declared an interest as a DNPA Authority member. Confirmed that he will not vote.
- James Wright declared an interest as a DNPA staff member. Confirmed that he will not vote.

Discussion points:

- Panel asked where the water will be drawn from, as the application does not mention the intake? FiPL team confirmed that water will be drawn from the streams either side of the landholding, where cattle are currently accessing and drinking

water from. This will bring water to the cattle, instead of allowing cattle access to the watercourses.

- It was therefore stipulated that the grazier should be involved in installing the pump systems, seeing as they will be responsible for checking on cattle and pumps going forward. They can then understand how to upkeep and fix them in case they get blocked or have any intake issues.
- Member raised that from experience, cattle will want to access the water courses, especially in hot dry weather, and will easily be able to force their way through scub and undergrowth to get there. Therefore, there needs to be considerable and appropriate intervention in place to ensure they do not have access to the water course. Will the 7m of fencing for each site be enough? It was confirmed that the cattle will have virtual fencing collars and so separating them from the watercourses in other areas will be manageable using this technology. The 7m of fencing is primarily to stop cattle accessing the area directly behind the pump stations and damaging pipework. The collars will be set to stop them going beyond this towards the watercourses.
- Panel therefore agreed that is essential that the grazier understands how the pump system operates, and therefore they must be included in their construction and maintenance.
- Panel queried whether this is potentially two separate applications - one about fencing the water course to protect it, and another about the grazing regime. Members sought clarity on this, and it was confirmed that the grazing regime is already in place using collars funded outside of FiPL, this project is to provide further additional benefit through an appropriate water supply system.

Scoring

The scoring by the FiPL team was confirmed:

	Score	Score after weighting
Project outcomes (Climate, Nature, People and Place) – 40%	8	3.2
Ability to deliver - 20%	8	1.6
Sustainability / legacy of projects - 20%	8	1.6
Value for Money - 20%	8	1.6
Total	32	8

Decision:

To approve this project subject to meeting the below condition:

1. The cattle grazier must be present and engaged with the pasture pump installation and upkeep, alongside the volunteer group and Sector Ranger.

John Howell left the meeting before voting.

For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Car Park Enhancements for Visitor Management

(Presented by James Wright)

Summary of application:

The strategic access upgrades to honey pot car park sites which will in turn provide conservation support to the surrounding areas.

Declarations of interest:

- Mark Williams declared an interest as a DNPA Authority member. Confirmed that he will not vote.
- James Wright declared an interest as a DNPA staff member. Confirmed that he will not vote.

Discussion points:

- Member suggested that the Annex A costings should include DNPA Ranger time as 'in-kind donation' as it show applicants contribution to the project's delivery.
- A recommendation was made to add bollards on the bunds, such as at Grenofen, to ensure that 4 by 4 vehicles do not bypass the bunds. These could be cut trees or granite boulders, but granite would be preferred as it is in keeping with the landscape.
- Does the Grenofen site receive of any access payments?
- Does keeping car park surfaces rough act as a deterrent to increased visitor numbers? It was discussed that whilst this would seem like a deterrent, the experience of the National Park is that visitors still use the car parks but complain of their condition and expand where they park to areas on the common, laybys and informal car parks. This creates further work and disturbances.
- What about the president this application sets for other applications of this nature? FiPL team confirmed that the data here shows that there is a need for these improvement works at these specific sites, relating to the projected growth of Plymouth. Any future applications coming from Common landowners would need to be supported with data and a clear need.
- What about one of the landowners' contributions to the project? It was discussed but confirmed that they would rather close the car parks off.

- There was general consensus that we need to be looking at solutions to these problems.
- Would the panel be supportive of increased costs in relation ot the provision of bollards? If the DNPA could access granite from our stores at Holming Beam that this would be DNPA contribution.
- The recommendation was made that bollards could be needed in the future, but to see what the need is after these works are completed and go from there.

Scoring

The scoring by the FiPL team was confirmed:

	Score	Score after weighting
Project outcomes (Climate, Nature, People and Place) – 40%	6	2.4
Ability to deliver - 20%	6	1.2
Sustainability / legacy of projects - 20%	6	1.2
Value for Money - 20%	8	1.6
Total	26	6.4

Decision:

To approve the project, with no conditions.

For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

Chagford Regenerative Farmers CIC – lime spreader

(Presented by Bea Dunscombe)

Summary of application:

The collective purchase of an appropriate-scale lime spreader for use across Chagford Regenerative Farmer CIC member farms, in order to help increase pH levels in both soil and the River Teign and Bovey catchment areas.

Declarations of interest:

- Christine Malseed declared an interest as her son is a member of the Chagford Regenerative Farmers CIC. Confirmed that she will not vote.

Discussion points:

- The Panel questioned whether it would be beneficial if more than one farmer could be trained up to operate the machinery? Which would relieve pressure on the 1 farmer who has taken responsibility for this role. FIPL confirmed that this has been their standard procedure for their existing shared machinery, and their system works well. It therefore isn't our responsibility to stipulate this.
- Panel asked if lime will be spread only on reseeded fields? Because there are a number of important plant species that could be negatively impacted due to the introduction of lime. It was confirmed that we understand that only fields that have been reseeded will be spread with lime, however, the FiPL team can check this.
- It was therefore flagged that it would be an expectation that group members ensure they are delivering walk-over surveys of fields ahead of liming to check existing species diversity.
- Panel endorsed this application for its collaborative nature and wide-spread impact. It was agreed that a lot of thought and detail has gone into the application, which was appreciated.

Scoring

The scoring by the FiPL team was confirmed:

	Score	Score after weighting
Project outcomes (Climate, Nature, People and Place) – 40%	6	2.4
Ability to deliver - 20%	8	1.6
Sustainability / legacy of projects - 20%	8	1.6
Value for Money - 20%	8	1.6
Total	30	7.2

Decision:

To approve the project, with no conditions.

The Panel provided the below recommendation, which the FiPL team should relay to the applicant:

- *If the Group decides to spread lime on any fields that have not yet been reseeded, the Panel advised that a walkover survey should be undertaken ahead of spreading, to ensure that no important species are present and at risk of damage from the introduction of lime.*

For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

AOB:

- FiPL extension update
- Panel membership changes going into 2026-27
- Moss Farm CSA application
- FiPL Showcase 5 Years of FiPL in early Spring
- Starting the 6th year of FiPL with workshops.
- Chairman confirmed he will be standing down in his role as chair and as panel member.