Dartmoor Farming in Protected Landscapes

Local Assessment Panel

Wednesday 12th November – Virtual Meeting

Attending: Alison Clish-Green, Shirley Mudge, James Wright, Ann Willcocks, Will Dracup, Mark Williams, Sarah Blyth

Dartmoor staff attending: Bea Dunscombe, Kaitlin Perryman

Apologies: Dan Alford, Christine Mark Williams, John Howell, Russel Ashford, Katie Wynter

Also in attendance: John Hunt - Westcountry Rivers Trust

Applications

Shorts Down and Middlemoor - Flood Risk Mitigation

(Presented by Bea Dunscombe)

Application initially presented in October 2025; Panel were supportive of the idea/intention however they voted to defer the application to give the applicant more time to consider the design of the ponds and to seek further advice from specialists to ensure their suitability for the site.

Summary of application:

To extend an existing attenuation pond to increase its floodwater storage capacity and create a series of additional scrapes, ponds and channels to slow down and capture excess water that runs off Shorts Down Common, channelling it into the nearby Tiddy Brook.

Declarations of interest:

No declarations of interest.

Note: John Hunt from the Westcountry Rivers Trust present for the meeting to answer any specialist technical questions and support the application presentation.

Discussion points:

- Sleeping policeman – how many and what are they made with?
    - This idea came via the recommendation of DNPA Headwaters. Where the compaction is particularly significant, the idea is that some small grassy mounds would direct the water into an area of bracken/scrub
- Can the path be widened to relieve the soil compaction happening on the path?
- What is the proposal to take the water out of the fields/across Witches Path as channelling/piping always blocks?

- Bigger pond looks good and needed but how come the pond is not higher up? Confirmed that applicant wants to gaze the fields with Belted Galloways and therefore location of the pond will not impact upon the areas for grazing
- Concerns over sleeping policeman on the common
- Could soil aerator be funded through FETF? Confirmed that applicant did receive solar pump through FETF so plans to pump water to toughs to allow cattle to graze in attenuation pond field for a few weeks of the year (recommended by NE). This solar (pump) will also be used to power electric fencing to keep the cattle out of the ponds.
- Long term plan confirmed – to move path and plant more trees at the source of the issue
- Confirmed that soil on site is thin mineral soil and the water issue is not just surface water, some of it is coming up from the ground.
- Panel asked what design features have been considered to ensure the pipe/culvert does not become blocked?
    - Short pipe - applicant will be able rod it out
    - Shouldn't be too much sediment (to block it) as this should be held back in the attenuation ponds and other features
- Significant concern over the culvert/cross drain (full of leaves) getting blocked – SWW confirmed that that culvert has never previously blocked and is in fact too efficient and currently not helping the issue.
- Question raised of maintenance required - confirmed that the applicant is onsite regularly and is strongly committed to this long term project

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%	6	1.2
Sustainability / legacy of projects - 20%	6	1.2
Value for Money - 20%	6	1.2
Total	26	6.8

Decision:

The Panel voted to approve this project in full.

For: 7
Against: 0
Abstained: 0