

Exmoor Area Panel

**Thursday, 20th June, 2019,
Time Not Specified**

Moorland Hall - Wheddon Cross

Agenda

- 1. Minutes of the Meeting 20.06.2019**

| (Pages 3 - 18)

Exmoor Area Panel Meeting
Minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2019 at The Moorland Hall Wheddon Cross

Attendees

John Bray	Winsford PC	Cllr Nick Thwaites	SWaT
Tony Howard	Withypool and Hawkridge PC	Cllr Andy Milne	SWaT
PCSO Brian Stevens	Avon and Somerset Constabulary	Roger Foxwell	Cutcombe PC
Heather Harley	ENP	John Anson	Cutcombe PC
Ruth McArthur	ENP	Vivian White	Cutcombe PC
Francis Nicholson	SCC	Val Carveth	Exton PC
Cllr Steven Pugsley	SWAT	Beccy Brown	SWaT

1. Apologies for Absence

Andy Bray	David Peake SCC Highways
Penny Webber	Phil Bauvis
David Powell	Margaret Rawle
Ann Sparling	Malcolm McCoy
David Garth	

2. Minutes of last meeting

Action: BB to make corrections to surnames
 No matters arising

3. Talk on Smart Communities form Jane Birch – Community Council for Somerset (SCC).

The organisation started in 1926 with the aim to improve the quality of life in communities. Jane talked about 3 strands to SCC work

Smart Communities work with organisations and groups on village hall projects, community building (sports halls etc) and village shops. They also provide community engagement and consultation support, project planning and support and funding advice, bid writing and strategy.

Village Agents support individuals throughout Somerset in our communities. Another 10 Village Agents have just been recruited to support the growing need. Mainly funding through Adult Social Care and the Care Quality Commission.

Good Neighbour Scheme – Lottery funded. Aimed to set up communities so people can help one another in their own and neighbouring communities. 27 groups have expressed an interest. Further information and a setting up guide is available on the website.

Full information on all the services and advice SCC provide are available on the website:
www.somersetccc.org.uk. Tel nos:01823 331222

4. Police Issues

PCSO Brian Stevens gave an over view of the main issue in the area – theft from farms. Items worth over £20k have been stolen from a farm near Brompton Ralph on 2 different occasions and just over the border towards North Devon 2 quad bikes have been taken. PCSO appealed to Panel to encourage farmers to register to Farm Watch.

Through the scheme signage is available warning people that the farm is part of Farm Watch and acts as a deterrent.

The Police will come to farms and provide advice on preventative measures available – CCTV, locks etc. Trackers on farm vehicles are an excellent method of tracing stolen items. In North Yorkshire the same quad bike has been stolen on 5 separate occasions and tracked and returned to the owner.

PCSO Stevens asked people to remain vigilant to any suspicious vehicles. Requests where possible to take number plate registration and report any suspicions so police can make a check.

Internet and phone scams are on the increase. PCSO Stevens requested that people look out for their vulnerable neighbours and relatives so they don't fall foul of the fraudsters.

5. SCC Highways

5.1 Davis Peake sent his apologies and sent the following update:

'As regards highways winter service, the review is still on-going. Once it has been completed, we will be communicating with all parish and town councils regarding the arrangements for the winter of 2019/2020.'

5.2 FN informed the Panel that despite making many representations, SCC haven't made up their minds on the policy for salt bins and salt bags for the forthcoming winter.

SP confirmed that a large piece of work had been completed by the Parish Councils to establish where the placement for the bags/bins should be in relation to areas of road most seriously affected by ice and snow.

FN raised concern about bins that have been brought by some PCs and that are not suitable to store salt. They should be of a certain quality and clearly recognisable.

VC said that Upton PC was investigating cost.

Jl thought that the Panel was looking into bulk buying the correct bins but SP said that this referred to the purchase of salt and setting up a salt cooperative could be looked into.

Panel are concerned that some PC won't take part in salt purchase and roads will not be consistently safe.

5.3 SP asked if there was anything the Panel could do to move things forward and he was mindful of the short window available with reference to the organisation of delivery and bad weather that could be experienced by November. In reality a decision needs to be made by August (6 weeks)

5.4 FN asked that a letter be written to the Leader, Deputy Leader and Mandy Chilcott (SCC councillor responsible for budget).

5.5 Action: SP agreed to draft a letter on behalf of the Panel.

6. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue

6.1 Proposed changes to the Fire Service

A representative from the Service was unavailable. AM gave an update to the Panel

On Wednesday the Service announced that it had to cut £8m and put forward 6 proposals. Out of Porlock, Dulverton and Minehead, it has been proposed that Porlock will close. Porlock is recognised as being one of the best stations and it is possible to be manned 90% of the time (volunteer crew have to be able to access the station within 7 minutes or the call goes to another station). AM said

that many people in Porlock are very concerned – 50% of population are over 60 and many have mobility issues – closure of station in the town increases risk to life. Importantly Porlock station is a first responder

6.2 Action: AM is drafting a letter and will send to SP and all PC

6.3 Action: Everyone was asked to respond to consultation.

6.4 FN and RMcA both very concerned that their organisations hadn't been alerted or consulted about the proposed changes. RMcA said that the NPA would need to consider its role / statutory purposes in any consultation response. This could include consideration of the impact of a closure on the response time for moorland fires.

The following link provides direct access to the proposals and consultation page. The consultation should be live from 1 July 2019 until 20 September 2019

<https://www.dsfire.gov.uk/SaferTogether/ServiceDeliveryConsultation/Index.cfm?siteCategoryId=18&T1ID=211>

<https://www.dsfire.gov.uk/ContactUs/MediaEnquiries/Index.cfm?siteCategoryId=6&T1ID=66>

<http://www.dsfire.gov.uk/SaferTogether/Index.cfm?siteCategoryId=18>.

6.5 With regards to issues of services on Exmoor, VC raised the issue of response time by ambulances in rural areas. Recently 1 person in Upton waited 6 hours for an ambulance.

7. Exmoor National Park Update (ENP) - Ruth McArthur

7.1 A full report is attached to these minutes

8. Headwaters of the River Exe report by Heather Harley

8.1 An article and brief summary of the project are attached to these minutes

8.2 RF suggested that the officials from the ENP should be invited to a working ENP farm to understand the problems that the farmers are facing.

8.3 Action: RMcA to arrange. *BB Updat: Amendment – this action to be removed. Not RMcA decision as to whether a visit is agreed*

9. Council update

9.1 Since the last Panel meeting, a new Council has been elected. Priorities include climate change, economic growth and housing (new build and existing housing stock). Full list of portfolio holders is listed in the appendices

9.2 BB said she aware that there are more concerns coming forward as to where to signpost people who are at risk of losing their homes in the private rented sector. In the first instance anyone who finds themselves in this position needs to remain in their accommodation and contact the Housing Options department via phone, putting query on the Council website via Firmsteps or email Housingoptions@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

People should be encouraged to register and bid on Homefinder and inform Housing Options of any change in circumstances ASAP as this can time to process.

9.3 Free fire safety checks are available and more information is listed in the appendices

9.4 BB gave a brief overview of the support that West Somerset Advice Bureau can provide to people with regards to a reduction in their monthly Wessex Water bill. Further information is available online and in the appendices of these minutes.

9.5 BB gave an overview of Route 60+ a scheme aimed to help senior drivers drive safely for longer and remain independent. Community groups can apply for a free training and talk session in their area. Further details in the appendices

10. Parish Lengthsman

10.1 No update

11. Matters arising

11.1 No issues arising from the floor

12. Dates of forthcoming meetings

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 3rd September at Winsford Village hall commencing at 7.30

Thursday 7th November 2019 at 7.00 pm – Moorland Hall Wheddon Cross

Thursday 16th January 2020 at 7.00 pm – Moorland Hall Wheddon Cross

The meeting closed at 8.50

Appendices

1. Portfolio Holders Chair of the Council – Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey

Vice-Chair of the Council – Cllr Simon Coles

The Executive are as follows:

Leader of the Council – Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts

Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communications and Culture – Cllr Benet Allen

Portfolio Holder for Community – Cllr Christopher Booth

Portfolio Holder for Housing – Cllr Fran Smith

Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources – Cllr Ross Henley

Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport – Cllr Mike Rigby

Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services – Cllr Alan Wedderkopp
Portfolio Holder for Climate Change – Cllr Peter Pilkington
Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development – Cllr Marcus Karvis
Portfolio Holder for Sports, Parks and Leisure – Cllr Richard Lees

The Chair of Scrutiny – Cllr Gwilym Wren

The group leaders are:

Liberal Democrats – Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts
Independent Group (including the Greens) – Cllr Gwilym Wren
Conservatives – Cllr Anthony Trollope Bellew
Labour – Cllr Libby Lisgo

2. Fire safety Checks

FREE Home Fire Safety Checks and Visits

Did you know you are entitled to a **FREE Home Fire Safety Check** and may also be entitled to a **FREE Home Fire Safety Visit**?

Do you know or care for someone that may benefit from this service?

All residents that live within Devon or Somerset are entitled to call our **FREEPHONE** advice number and receive **FREE home safety advice**.

It will take no more than 5 minutes and you will be asked some simple questions that will help our advisor decide if you need a **FREE Home Fire Safety Visit**.

Home Fire Safety Visits, take around 30 minutes and are bespoke to suit the circumstances of the individuals and homes we visit.

If a Full **FREE Home Fire Safety Visit** is considered appropriate, it may also include fitting **FREE** smoke detectors or other equipment should you require them. You would also be offered all the advice you may need to make you safer in your home.

Visits are arranged to suit your circumstances and at times to suit you.

Calls can also be made on behalf of others that you care for, and arrangements made via a preferred third party contact.

If a visit is not considered appropriate following your telephone call, our team will ensure you are sent all the relevant **FREE advice and literature** to help you carry out the checks in your own home.

To receive the **FREE Home Fire Safety Check** and seek advice about a **FREE** Home Fire Safety Visit, please call **0800 05 02 999**.

Or Text info line: 078 00 00 2476

Further details can be found on our website at www.dsfire.gov.uk/YourSafety/SafetyInTheHome

Kevin Mitcham GFireE

Crew Manager – Prevention Team

t. 01935 382017 www.dsfire.gov.uk

3. WSAB – Wessex Water fund

WSAB funded to support people with their applications to reduce water payments. 9 out of 10 applications accepted in last 2 months. Criteria:

- Low income
- Use allot of water for health reasons
- 3 or more children
- Wessex Water debt or other debts

WSAB can prepare financial statement showing the amount clients can pay – this can be a little as £5 per month. If there are arrears a payment of £1 per month together with the lower amount can result in write-off of the debt after 24 payments with none missed. Called Assist and Restart (details of these are on Wessex Water website) <https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/your-account/help-paying/lower-your-water-bills>

If client receives pension credit and lives alone or a couple both receive pension credit or state pension is the only income an application can be made to reduce the cost of water by 25%. <https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/your-account/help-paying/pension-credit-discount>

4. Route 60+

Route 60+ events aim to help senior drivers drive safely for longer.

Designed to help you keep your licence for as long as possible by addressing key issues such as how vehicles have changed over the years, how our own driving skills and habits have changed, and how we can go about updating our skills.

Tel 01823 423430 roadsafety@somerset.gov.uk

Exmoor National Park Authority (NPA) Exmoor Panel Update 20/06/19

Rural Worker and Succession Farm Dwelling Guidance Consultation: Draft guidance has been published for public consultation from **7th May until Wednesday 31st July 2019**

The consultation can be found on the ENPA website <http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/rural-worker-and-succession-farm-dwelling-guidance-consultation> and copies of the reports are available at:

- Exmoor House in Dulverton;
- the National Park Centres at Dulverton, Dunster and Lynmouth;
- Lynton and Porlock libraries; and
- Somerset West and Taunton Offices in Williton and North Devon Council Offices in Barnstaple.

The response form is also available to view and download. If more space is needed then further forms can be printed or photocopied or additional sheets appended.

Comments can only be made on the draft guidance as the Local Plan is already adopted and therefore it does not form part of the consultation. This is explained in a “Quick Guide” document which can be found here: http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1615564/Rural-Housing-Quick-Guide-and-diagram.pdf

There is also a “Frequently Asked Questions” document can be found here: http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1615537/Rural-Housing-FAQ-for-web.pdf and

The draft document intends to assist those who are seeking to provide a rural worker or succession farm worker’s dwelling – this includes guidance for farm and forestry workers for the younger generation taking on the farm business. It therefore sets out detailed guidance on the practical aspects of making planning applications for new homes for those working in land based businesses in the National Park. Adopted Local Plan policies require such development to meet certain tests and the draft guidance explains in more detail how these issues should be addressed. It also explains size requirements and provides advice on location, siting and design considerations.

The document is intended to be formally adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to enable greater weight to be given to it when deciding relevant planning applications.

Housing: Since 2005, over 200 local people on Exmoor have benefitted from locally tied affordable homes. Some have been self-build, some delivered by private developers or landlords and others by housing associations.

The Exmoor Rural Housing Network has looked to help find solutions. The Network provides a forum for a number of Exmoor based organisations with an interest in housing. Action has included recruiting and training 'Local Housing Contacts' to act as a link within communities and help signpost households to the appropriate organisations.

Over the last couple of years, households in most Exmoor parishes have also received a housing need questionnaire, enabling up to date information on the number, type and size of affordable homes needed.

The next steps are to work jointly with the community to address any need identified. This is already underway for the parishes of Cutcombe, Exford, Exton/Bridgetown, Luccombe, Luxborough, Timberscombe, Winsford and Wootton Courtenay who, following a 2018 survey have set up an affordable housing group with the National Park Authority to identify solutions.

Self Build Tour: We have also been working with Exmoor Young Voices, jointly organised a tour to visit local need self-build homes on Exmoor to help others considering this approach. It was felt this had been very useful – in particular in the opportunity to see real life examples of floorspace and some of the ways that home builders had found to maximise space including through layout and the use of outbuildings.

Rural Enterprise Exmoor: This is early information for local business, those who are self-employed, or are local entrepreneurs about a new project launching later this summer – Rural Enterprise Exmoor.

This research focused project aims to help the National Park and partners to better understand the breadth and depth of business activity within the National Park, gain representative views of the business community and identify key challenges and opportunities to support the Exmoor economy in harmony with its National Park status.

Data from the Office of National Statistics suggests there are some 800 businesses operating on Exmoor – but this is largely derived from VAT registrations, PAYE and / or business rates meaning several of our small enterprises with no formal staff, operating under the VAT threshold without businesses premises are not picked up.

Although the National Park Authority is not the sole economic development body for the area, we recognise that the NPA has a role to play, through facilitation of

planning, making the links and providing a rural voice. This initiative is being conducted in partnership and with support from other bodies such as the District Councils, Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership and the West Somerset Opportunities Area. Collectively working alongside the private sector, we hope to refresh our approach to supporting enterprise in this rural area whilst conserving the special qualities of the National Park. As with any area there are obvious challenges and opportunities associated with being based in the National Park but if we don't know who is out there and what they're doing it is difficult to establish what opportunities there are to support them. "

The project will build on the work of the New Economics Foundation conducted over 10 years ago to establish a Greater Exmoor Sustainable Economy Strategy. Work will be starting in July running over an estimated 12-month period to complete an audit of local business activity, gather representative views through surveys, workshops and focus groups and develop a refreshed strategic approach going forward. This approach will consider business views, the role of the Park Authority and partners. It will be used to guide future project development and to feed into the work conducted by others. IF you wish to be kept informed of the work as the project develops please email RuralEnterprise@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk or call 01398 323665.

Planned Works in the Exmoor Panel Area

Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross 20 June 2019

	Parish/Town	Location	Description	Start	Finish	Duration
Completed						
SCC	Exford	Edgcott Road	Repairs to retaining wall.			Completed
SCC	Luccombe	Doverhay, West Luccombe	Drainage repairs between Luckbarrow and West Luccombe Farm.			Completed
SCC	Porlock	Furzeland Road	Footway resurfacing.			Completed
SCC	Luxborough	Vellors Way	Repairs to parapet of Pool Bridge.			Completed
Ongoing						
SCC	Luccombe	Doverhay, West Luccombe	Carriageway resurfacing between Luckbarrow and West Luccombe Farm. Temporary road closures between 07:30 and 17:30.	19June	21 June	3 days
SCC	Exton and Brompton Regis	Heathpoult Cross to Dulverton road	Carriageway patching. Temporary traffic signals at times.	10June	21 June	2 weeks
Future						
SCC	Cutcombe	A396 Bridgetown Road, Wheddon Cross	Carriageway resurfacing at Brake Cottage Corner. Temporary road closure between 07:30 and 17:30.	24June	24 June	1 day
SCC	Brushford	Hele Manor Lane	Carriageway resurfacing. Temporary road closures between 07:30 and 17:30.	1 July	5 July	5 days
SCC	Exford	Highermill Farm Lane	Repairs to retaining wall. Temporary road closure.	TBC	TBC	1 week
Other						
SCC	Various	Various	2019 carriageway surface dressing programme will be running from the 24 th June 2019 to the end of August.			

Article for the Exmoor Panel July 2019

The Headwaters of the Exe Project was launched in 2016 and forms part of South West Water's Upstream Thinking programme, offering an innovative way to improve the quality of drinking water being abstracted from rivers in 10 catchments across the South West.

It costs South West Water more to treat water that contains silt, fertiliser or pesticides to make the high quality water we expect from our taps. The idea behind Upstream Thinking is to lower this cost by improving the quality of 'raw' river water. On this basis South West Water is currently funding three projects on the River Exe, of which Headwaters of the Exe is one, which will run until March 2020.

'Headwaters of the Exe' is a partnership project with South West Water, Exmoor National Park Authority, Exmoor Hill Farming Network and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest. It has a steering group comprising local landowners and organisations including the Exmoor Society and the Exmoor Rivers and Streams Group. Exeter University and volunteers carry out monitoring to ensure that the project is having the desired effect.

The Headwaters of the Exe Project covers an area of 27,559 hectares, including the upper Exe, the Rivers Barle, Quarne, Pulham, Haddeo and smaller tributaries, as well as Wimbleball Lake.

The programme is delivering a range of work, including:

- Advice to farmers, foresters and game shoot managers;
- A capital grant fund;
- Training events, site visits and demonstrations to promote good practice;
- Rights of way maintenance to reduce erosion and run-off in high risk areas;
- Monitoring to identify any localised water quality issues relating to sewerage; and
- Control of invasive species.

The possibility of continuing the project into the next round of Upstream Thinking, which would run from 2020 to 2025, is currently being looked into. South West Water has asked the Headwaters of the Exe project to identify issues and propose options for a future project on Exmoor. One issue which has been brought to the team's attention is the impact of roads on water quality, for instance through the deposit of mud and silt, as well as oil and other pollutants, into watercourses. The farm advisory work for the project is currently undertaken by FWAG SW which is already working with county highways teams in some areas, including Somerset.

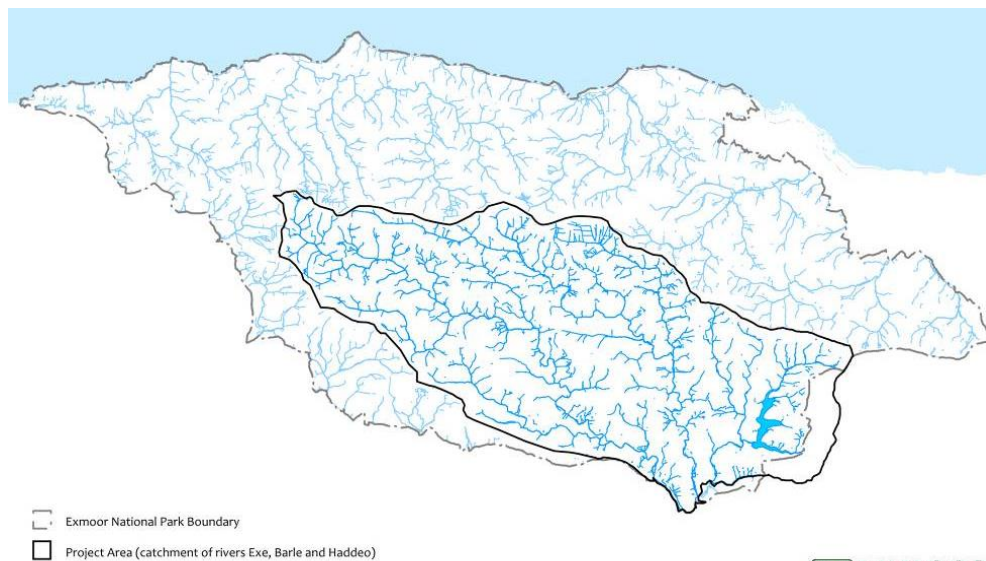
As part of the scoping process, the Project would very much like to know whether Parishes have situations where road runoff may be having an impact on their watercourses. If there are any areas which Parishes would like to let the Headwaters of the Exe Project know about, or for more information, please contact Programme Manager, Heather Harley by email:

hjharley@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk or phone 01398 322277.

HEADWATERS OF THE EXE CATCHMENT PROGRAMME

The Headwaters of the Exe project is working with farmers and land managers to ensure good water quality in the catchment of the River Exe. It is part of South West Water's Upstream Thinking programme.

The project will run from 2015 – 2020 and is funded by South West Water and the Exmoor National Park Authority. It covers an area of 27,559 hectares and includes the upper Exe, the Rivers Barle, Quarme, Pulham, Haddeo and smaller tributaries, as well as Wimbleball Reservoir.



The programme will deliver a range of work, including:

- Advice to farmers, foresters and game shoot managers;
- A capital grant fund;
- Training events, site visits and demonstrations to promote good practice;
- Rights of way maintenance to reduce erosion and run-off in high risk areas;
- Monitoring to identify any localised water quality issues relating to sewerage; and
- Control of invasive species.

Farming

The programme of support for farmers will consist of advice, training and events. Specialist advisers from FWAG SW are available to carry out free farm advisory visits to 50 farms in high priority parts of the catchment and provide confidential reports. Farmers wishing to take up the advice will also be eligible for a capital grant of up to £4,000 to carry out work on the farm to help protect water quality. For further advice please contact Adam Lockyear, FWAG SW, on 01823 660684 or adam.lockyear@fwagsw.org.uk.

Forestry

There is a programme of support for woodland owners and managers, including events, advice and capital grants. Woodland creation will be encouraged in appropriate parts of the catchment.

For further advice please contact Adam Lockyear, FWAG SW, on 01823 660684 or adam.lockyear@fwagsw.org.uk.

Game Shoots

The catchment is a premier game shoot location, which is vitally important to the local economy. The project is able to offer capital grants and advice to shoot owners and managers for improvements to water management.

Access

The widespread network of public rights of way, permitted paths and open access land are an important asset for Exmoor. However, surveys have shown that silt and mud can rapidly enter rivers and streams from these tracks and paths. A programme of work is being carried out by Exmoor National Park Authority focussing on those paths which have the highest risk of erosion and run-off affecting watercourses.

Sewerage

Localised monitoring is being carried out to collect data relating to sewerage, particularly around discharge points for the smaller sewage treatment works. This monitoring will be undertaken by volunteers through the Riverfly Partnership / River Exe and Tributaries Association and will provide an evidence base for action under any future funding programmes.

Ecology

The catchment includes the River Barle Site of Special Scientific Interest, parts of which are assessed as being in “unfavourable condition”, partly because of the presence of non-native invasive species including Japanese knotweed, montbretia, Himalayan balsam and signal crayfish.

The programme is supporting the control of non-native invasive species in the Exe catchment through existing partnership projects.

Further information

If you would like to know more about the project, please contact:

Heather Harley, Programme Manager (Headwaters of the Exe), on 01398 322277 or hjharley@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

Katherine Williams, Exmoor Hill Farming Network Officer, on 01643 841455, 07970 795808 or KWilliams@northdevonplus.co.uk

Or visit our webpage at www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/headwaters