

DARTMOOR COMMONERS' COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Dartmoor Commoners' Council held at Two Bridges Hotel, Princetown on Wednesday 19 June 2024.

Participants:

Mr P French – Chairman	Mr J Cooper	Ms T May
Mr L Branfield – Vice-Chairman	Mr W Dracup	Mr M Radmore
Mr P Abel	Mr K Edwards	Mr J Reddaway
Mrs M Alford	Mrs C Faulkner	Mr J Shears
Mr R Ashford	Mr P Heard	Mr T Stratton
Mr P Cleave	Mr J Jordan	Mrs P Warren
Mr A Coaker	Mr R Leigh	Mrs A Willcocks.
	Mrs K Little	
Mrs S Sloman	Mrs K McKechnie (DLPO)	

1. Chairman's Introduction

The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Received from Mr S Lee & Mrs A Webber.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the Council Meeting held 1 May 2024 were confirmed & signed.

4. Matters outstanding from previous meetings

4.1 Council's TB Working Group: Update on engagement with APHA & NFU TB Team

The Group has yet to take up the NFU TB Team's offer to meet. Anton Coaker is in contact with APHA regarding the 6 monthly interval tests & will seek clarity on post breakdown testing periods.

5. Correspondence Received

A list of correspondence received had been circulated to all Council Members with copies emailed to some Members upon request.

6. Matters brought forward at the direction of the Chair

None

7. Meetings with Council Representation:

7.1 Land Management Working Group: 8 & 22 May – Tracy May

Set up by Defra to support the Home Office to scope out a Wildfire Strategy & Action Plan. There will be about 6 meetings held every 2 weeks, although the next meeting will not take place until after the General Elections.

This Group is not to be confused with the Land Use Management Group (LUMG) which is due to be established following the Independent 'Fursdon' Review.

7.2 Dartmoor Commons Owners Association: 15 May – Philip French

7.3 Our Upland Commons Local Area Group*: 20 May – Mary Alford

*Notes available. If any Council Member wishes to receive copies of any notes, please email office@dartmoorcommoners.org.uk

8. **Dartmoor Commoners' Council Election Results for 2024**

The following commoners have recently been appointed to represent the Commoners grazing 10 or more livestock units:

North: Mr John Cooper & Ms Tracy May

South: Mr Anton Coaker & Mr James French

East: Mrs Charlotte Faulkner & Mr Robert Jordan

West: Mr Neil Cole & Mr Mark Radmore

The following commoners have recently been appointed to represent the Commoners grazing less than 10 livestock units:

North: Mrs Kate Little

East: Mr Ken Edwards

West: Mr Robert Leigh

The newly elected Members will take office with effect from July 2024. They will be formally welcomed on to Council at the AGM when those Members retiring will formally step down. All of the above-mentioned shall serve until 30th June 2028.

A point was raised on advertising costs for the elections, which this year cost approx. £2230 & questions asked on how effective this is in this day & age. However, Council's Act states that notice is given by newspaper advertisement. It was agreed that Council's election procedures will be reviewed.

9. **Update from Dartmoor National Park Authority**

Apologies were received from Simon Lee. Will Dracup reported the responses from the Recreational Team at DNPA to previous concerns raised by Council on the numbers being permitted to partake in some **recreational events** & that procedures, as set out in the Recreational Events Policy, were not being followed as some common owners were not aware of forthcoming events:

- The Recreation Team work with event organisers to limit numbers participating in events where there is likely to be negative impacts. However, the Team cannot stop activities as this is only a notification process.
- The Recreation Team do not have the powers to cap numbers, only to advise & to not support if event organisers don't follow their advice.
- Be reassured that all events notified are passed through the established system.
- The Recreation Team has reiterated the need for feedback after problematic events. This gives them the evidence to deal with repetitive problematic events.
- The Recreation Team has offered to meet with a couple of Commoners if they would like to be involved in improving or reviewing the current system.

Council Members agreed that it would be a good idea to meet with the Recreational Team at DNPA to discuss not just recreational events but also how best to get the message across that cycling across common land is not permitted.

10. **Review of structure & operation of Dartmoor Commoners' Council**

The Independent (Fursdon) Review recommended that the current structure & operation of Council should be reviewed to identify ways of reinforcing its effectiveness. In its

response to the Review, Council acknowledged that it cannot continue in its current format & committed to conducting its own internal review. Following which, a document on potential options to reinforce Council's effectiveness had been redrafted after an internal meeting held with Council Members on 8 May 2024. It incorporated all of the recommendations put forward & was circulated to Council Members ahead of tonight's meeting with a request that Members familiarise themselves with the proposals & contact the office with any queries in advance.

The Chairman proposed that Council accepts the document en bloc & that the proposed new, internal way of working be implemented at the AGM. Following a discussion & an agreement that the document would be reviewed periodically & at least 12 monthly, a vote by ballot was held.

The motion was carried with 17 Members voting in favour, 4 against with 1 abstention.

The Chairman reminded Members that a draft Code of Conduct & a revised set of Standing Orders had been circulated which require any comments to be put in writing to the office by 30 June 2024. Both of these documents will be presented for potential approval at the AGM.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Council will be the Annual General Meeting to be held on Wednesday 31 July 2024 at 7.30pm at the Two Bridges Hotel, Princetown.

The Chairman declared the public meeting closed & proposed a motion to go into a closed session. The outcome of these discussions is recorded in the confidential section of the meeting minutes, available to Council Members only.

Signed: *Philip French*

Date: *31st July 2024*