



Minchinhampton calculations. A note of the meeting was provided to all Council Members. A further meeting will be held in July.

#### **4.2 Agri-Environment Agreements**

A number of Local Commoners' Associations & farmers have yet to receive any payment for their 2017 agri-environment agreements with Natural England (NE). The Chairman reported that legally, Defra do not have to pay these agreements until the June of the following year. However, NE has always stated that its policy is to pay an interim payment by June in the year of the claim & the balance at the end of that year. This process appears to have broken down nationally. Council wrote to NE's Chairman, Andrew Sells, who has since suggested that the fault lay with the RPA. At the recent RPA CSG meeting, stakeholders were assured by the RPA that this was not the case.

Maurice Retallick has been liaising with Mel Stride MP for Central Devon & Dr Sarah Wollaston MP for Totnes on the late payment issue. The matter has been taken up with the Treasury & although George Eustice MP has written to Maurice, the issue still remains. Maurice has also spoken to the NFU Uplands Committee Chairman, Robin Milton, who has offered to try & progress the matter with Michael Gove MP & Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Our Chairman acknowledged that the issue is a deterrent to people to enter into agri-environment schemes in the future & agreed to contact Robin Milton to update him of the situation on Dartmoor.

The Chairman reiterated that Natural England is encouraging all agreement holders who have not received any money for their agreements to complete their customer complaint form – <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/4LIRL/>. Council is aware that those who have used this process have since received payments.

Council has also written to Defra to request that serious consideration is given to offering existing HLS agri-environment agreements the opportunity to continue until such time as the proposed universal land management scheme or a dedicated commons scheme become available.

#### **4.3 Health & Harmony Consultation**

The Chairman thanked Ann Willcocks, Mary Alford, Russell Ashford, Jonathan Aylett & Philip French for working together & submitting a response on behalf of Council. A copy of Council's response is available on our website. Mary Alford expressed disappointment that a paragraph on removing badgers from the protected species list was not included in Council's response. The Chairman explained that although the submission did state that TB is a serious problem, it would not be correct for Council, a statutory body, to make a specific request regarding removal of badgers without having formally adopted a position statement.

#### **4.4 TB Regulations Meeting with APHA & Defra**

Following concerns raised at the last Council Meeting over issues commoners are experiencing with the TB Regulations, a meeting has been arranged with APHA & Defra TB Policy for 12 June 2018 (subsequently postponed).

### **5. Matters brought forward**

#### **5.1 Use of Dart Guns on the Commons (see minutes of meeting 8 Aug 2018 for further clarification)**

Council has been asked for a formal view on the use of Dart Guns on the commons, specifically, for darting ponies that are part of the Dartmoor Hill Pony Association's Mare Contraception Scheme. Ponies currently benefitting from Defra's derogation must not be included in the scheme, as this may imply that a feral herd is being managed. Council

does not wish to put the derogation in jeopardy, as it appears that the Minister has now agreed that the derogation can remain until Brexit, when replacement legislation will be considered. Following a discussion, Council Members wished to support the scheme as long as the consent of the landowner is secured & all actions are carried out within the law & Council's Regulations, the darting is carried out at the pony owner's request & that all pony herders on that common are notified. The chairman agreed to draft a protocol for circulation to Council Members for comment.

## **5.2 Appointment of Veterinary Surgeon**

Under Section 3 (2) (e) of the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985, Members agreed to ask Stuart Lake if he is prepared to continue as the Veterinary Surgeon on Council.

## **5.3 Council's Annual Dinner**

Last year's event was cancelled due to lack of numbers, despite extending the invitation to all commoners registered with Dartmoor Commoners' Council. The Chairman stated that the dinner is primarily a social event for Council Members & if the event is to continue, Members must give a commitment to attend. It was agreed not to continue to hold the event.

## **5.4 Welsh Commoners' Visit – July 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>**

Commoners from South Wales have been awarded funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund to visit other parts of the UK & talk to commoners about specific issues. They are visiting Dartmoor to talk about Fire Management Plans & TB Regulations. The Dartmoor Hill Farm Project is participating in the visit & Council Members will be invited to participate. Further details will follow.

## **5.5 'Our Common Cause' Project**

An event will be held on Dartmoor, next year, to celebrate commoning, to look at some of the aspects of commoning & to raise its profile, locally & nationally. Council Members agreed that Council should have a formal link with this event & engage in its' development.

## **6. Joint Recreation Events Policy**

A copy of the draft policy had been circulated with the agenda. Council Members reviewed its content & commented accordingly. Ally Kohler agreed to make the appropriate changes to the policy, as discussed. The final draft version will be circulated to Council Members before being presented to the event organisers. It is hoped that DNPA will adopt the policy in September.

## **7. Dartmoor Commoners' Council Elections 2018**

The following Council Members have served their term & are eligible for re-appointment, unless they choose not to stand again or other nominations are put forward, in which case there shall be an election:-

- North Quarter – Crispin Alford & Michael Reddaway
- South Quarter – Phil Cleave & Ann Willcocks
- East Quarter – Layland Branfield, Gordon Mortimore & Michael Mudge
- West Quarter – Phil Abel & Mary Alford

All commoners nominated, nominating or voting must have paid their contributions for the current financial year.

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

Ally Kohler reported that the Love Moor Life campaign was officially launched at the end of May & that the DNPA will be continually addressing the issues of dogs, litter & wild camping throughout the summer months.

A discussion then took place on the issue of campervans & littering.

Ally Kohler also reported that as part of the Government's '25 Year Environment Plan', there is to be a 21<sup>st</sup> Century 'Hobhouse' Review of National Parks & AONBs in England. The review, led by writer Julian Glover, will explore how access to these areas can be improved, how those who live & work in these areas can be better supported, & these areas role in growing the rural economy.

**9. Pony Working Group – Proposal for Dealing with Dangerous Animals on the Commons**

Council Members agreed to adopt a procedure for dealing with dangerous animals on the commons. A copy is attached to these minutes (Appendix A).

**10. Road Traffic Accidents involving Livestock Meeting**

The Chairman attended a meeting in the New Forest, organised by Defra (at Council's request), between relevant organisations to discuss this issue. Karla McKechnie (DLPO) was unable to attend for personal reasons. The Chairman reported that it was an interesting & constructive meeting. It raised the idea of forming a Dartmoor summit group that relevant organisations including the Police, Devon Highways & Dept. of Transport could be asked to join to pool information & develop ideas. The Chairman has since met with Inspector Simon Jenkinson, head of the Alliance Road Policing Team with Devon & Cornwall Police, who supports this idea. Defra will produce a formal note of the meeting which will be circulated in due course.

**11. Council's view on Farm Share Agreements & Grazing Agreements**

The Dartmoor Commons Act 1985 allows Council to recognise common rights associated with land that is tenanted under a formal farm tenancy agreement. This is different to a farm share agreement or a grazing agreement. These are licences, often for less than 2 years, which do not automatically renew. Council has been asked to consider accepting these types of agreements if they have access to common rights (including contract sharing farm arrangements). Following a discussion, it was agreed that Council form a small working group, to include the land agents, to look into this further & report back to Council.

**12. Date of Next Meeting**

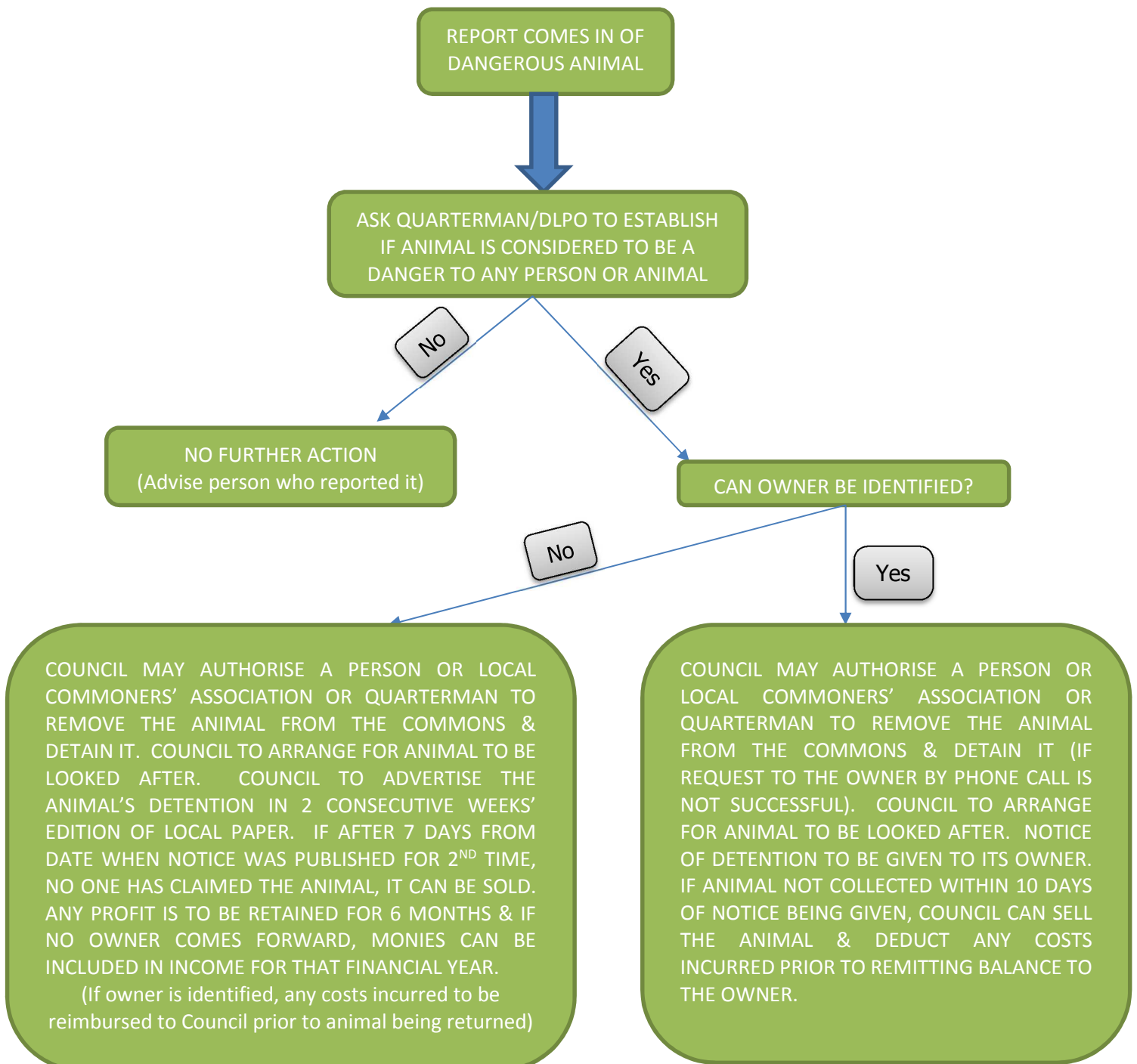
The next meeting of the Council will be the Annual Meeting to be held on Wednesday 8 August 2018 at 7:30pm at Two Bridges Hotel, Princetown.

**Signed:**.....

**Date:**.....



## PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH DANGEROUS OR ILLEGAL ANIMALS ON THE COMMON



**IF NO ONE IS AVAILABLE, COUNCIL HAS THE AUTHORITY TO NOMINATE SOMEONE & PAY THEM TO DEAL WITH ANIMAL**