

period for Dartmoor. They have also asked that each Local Commoners' Association look at their maps & identify the key issues *prior* to meeting with the Mapping Team. Council is aware that many commons are faced with significant reductions in their eligible area due mostly to the removal of certain types of vegetation including, but not exclusively, bracken & gorse. Following a discussion, it was agreed that Council write to the RPA to express disappointment over the delays in arranging the meeting to discuss the common's maps & to raise concerns over the changes made to many of the commons' eligible areas.

4.2 Electronic Identification (EID) of Cattle & Sheep

Following Defra's Cattle Identification & Livestock Movement Team visit to Dartmoor in December, a copy of Dartmoor's TB Plan & a digital map showing the Common Land units on Dartmoor has been sent to Laura Monkman (team leader). Council has offered to work with Defra to ensure any new regulations brought in are workable on common land before they are finalised & go out for consultation.

5. Council's T B Working Group

Members from Council's T B Working Group have reviewed Dartmoor's TB Control Plan & updated it accordingly. Cattle Grazier's Packs for 2019 have been sent to Local Association Secretaries with a note advising that the plan for each common must include all the cattle graziers on that common. It was also agreed that Dartmoor Commoners' Council should confirm its role in initiating & delivering the Dartmoor TB Control Plan.

An issue still to be addressed is the impact of movement regulations on those farmers practicing transhumance who have to move their cattle further than 10 miles. Council has written to APHA & Defra TB Policy team to request a meeting to discuss if a risk based approach could be considered for the few farmers who are affected.

Council's T B Working Group is to be formalised & a Terms of Reference produced to clarify its role & membership.

6. Defra's Environmental Land Management system (ELMS)

The Chairman had previously mentioned in his annual report to Council (August 2018) that he & other Council Members had contributed to DNPA's Task & Finish Group set up to consider future land management options for Dartmoor. This included preparing a submission to Defra to trial a new land management scheme on common land (Dartmoor Test & Trials, which builds on the Dartmoor Farming Futures' trials). Following on from this, the Chairman reported that the Dartmoor Test & Trials has been selected by Defra. It has been suggested that a steering group is established on Dartmoor to progress this initiative if it is successful at the next Defra panel in April. Some Council members felt that Council should set up its own group to feed into the steering group. This suggestion is to be considered further.

The Chairman offered to send a note to all Council Members, summarising progress to date & setting out the relationship between Dartmoor Farming Future & Defra's Tests & Trials.

7. Matters Brought Forward at the Direction of the Chairman

7.1 Funds held in Reserve

Having reviewed the position, in view of the uncertain times ahead, it was agreed that the amount of monies held in reserve is not reduced. Additionally, the Office Administrator confirmed that, as the funds are not to be tied up or invested in a risk based market, they are currently receiving a competitive return.

7.2 Ponies

Council's Pony Working Group had recommended that Council write to Laura Monkman & Tristan Crago (Defra) & copy in the Minister, with its concerns regarding equine ID Regulations & reiterating the request for Tristan to come to Dartmoor. Council Members agreed to this request.

Additionally, the Pony Working Group recommended that a letter be sent to Eamon Crowe (Natural England) to ask exactly what pony information he required from Council & why. This is following his request for information on ponies at the last PAG meeting. Again, Council Members agreed to this request.

Concerns were also raised by several Council Members about the number of unmarked ponies that are starting to appear. There were reports of approx. 40 ponies roaming the commons in the south quarter & approx. 25 ponies in the Belstone/Oke Tor area. Council's Pony Working Group Chairman, John Jordan, acknowledged that some pony drifts had not been particularly successful this year & has requested that photographs be taken of these ponies. The issue will be pursued by Council's Pony Working Group.

8. Update from Dartmoor National Park Authority

Rob Steemson reported on the following:

He thanked those commoners who attended the Steering Group meeting on 14 February 2019 to consider the draft vision for the DNPA Management Plan. The next step in developing the plan is to share the draft vision with the various topic groups that took part in the Dartmoor Debates. It is hoped that this will happen May/June.

The Uplands Alliance have organised a roundtable discussion in London on 18 March 2019 involving a small group of upland farmers & Defra officials. Russell Ashford (as Chair of the Hill Farm Project) & Layland Branfield are attending the meeting from Dartmoor.

DNPA have recently met with Police & Forestry England regarding raves & various options to restrict access to forests are being looked in to.

DNPA are holding a road summit meeting with Highways, Police & other relevant bodies which will review signage, speeding & animal incidents.

DNPA Rangers have renewed their Ranger Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) link with the Police. The main part of this arrangement is being able to share intelligence & information. Therefore, when we witness an incident, this can be followed up with an appropriate letter to the offender &/or vehicle owner. We use this to enforce Road Traffic Act & DNPA Byelaws. We are also able to officially stop & direct traffic on the road at incidents & upon emergencies which includes, when requested, to enforce Police Road Closed signs. Rob reported that recently he witnessed a lorry cause damage to Newbridge & was able to obtain name & address of the driver using CSAS powers.

DNPA are hosting its Annual Briefing for Event Organisers on 3 April 2019 from 6pm-9pm. Those Council Members who were involved in producing the Recreation Events Policy have been invited & the offer is extended to any Council Member who wishes to go. Jonathan Aylett & Kate Little offered to attend.

9. Update from Dartmoor Livestock Protection Officer.

Karla McKechnie read out her report & a copy is attached (Appendix A).

A discussion took place regarding lambs that have been condemned due to dog worms. The Chairman suggested that this is looked into further & Ann Willcocks offered to do some research on this.

10. Insurance Cover for Swaling on Commons

As previously reported, Council cannot have a generic public liability policy that covers the local commoners associations (LCA) when swaling, as Council does not have a direct responsibility or a direct input in this activity. All LCAs have been advised to take out their own insurance policy. However, it appears that it is proving increasingly difficult to obtain this type of cover for controlled burning as the annual premiums quoted are not affordable. However, it was mentioned that most farm business insurance covered the legitimate activities of the farmers & swaling is a legitimate activity & part of the farming activities. Council has exhausted all of its lines of enquiry on this matter & it is down to each LCA to decide how they wish to address this issue.

11. Declarations of Interest – Pecuniary & Personal

Council Members were asked to update the records that Council holds of the meetings & working parties that they attend on behalf of Council. This information also acts as a 'declaration of interest' record & it is the responsibility of Council Members to declare any personal or pecuniary interest that could influence their decision making, or could be perceived to be so by the public. This opportunity was also used to begin creating a database of organisations that Council has 'a seat at the table' & who, from Council, sits in that seat. This will be reviewed annually at Council's Annual Meeting.

It was agreed that John Waldon would represent Council at South West Uplands Network (SWUN) & that Mary Alford would be Council's representative on the Common Cause local steering group.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Wednesday 22 May 2019 at 7:30pm at Two Bridges Hotel, Princetown

Signed:.....

Date:.....



Dartmoor Livestock Protection Officer's Report – March 2019

Dog Attacks – 37 attacks on sheep since the beginning of the year.

The majority of these attacks have been crimed with the Police. I am working very closely with the Police. They are issuing Voluntary Control Orders together with the threat of prosecution if a dog attacks a second time. I am encouraging people who witness dog attacks to phone me with details. I am in regular contact with the Rural Crime Officer, PC Martin Beck & we will be meeting next week at the Rural Crime Summit.

There is a sheep trapped on a ledge at Merrivale Quarry & at my request, the Dartmoor Rescue Group is hoping to lift it to safety, as they did on a previous occasion for me at Foggintor.

Road Traffic Accidents – 18 so far this year.

A round-up of RTAs for 2018 is a total of 191, which is higher than the totals for the last 3 years.

There is a meeting on 15 March 2019 with representatives from Devon County Council, Devon Highways, DNPA, Dartmoor Commoners' Council, SpeedWatch & others including Geoffrey Cox, MP, with the aim of obtaining agreement to reduce the speed limit on unfenced moorland roads that currently allow 60mph, so that all unfenced moorland roads have a limit of 40mph.

Up-date on the speed visors with the highest recorded vehicle speed each month from August 2018 to Feb 2019:

Bennett's Cross – 110, 105, 93, 95, 75, 87, 93

Sharpitor – 106, 96, 109, 102, 91, 101, 125

I have one highest speed for Bel Tor which was 82 in Jan 2019 & one for Haytor which was also 82 in Aug 2018.

Ponies

I have seen several ponies in poor condition, some of which have had to be put down & others have been removed.

There are ponies on Roborough Down & Whitchurch with cough symptoms & nasal discharge. These are being monitored.

I had an unusual pony death on Dunnabridge Common, approximately 10 metres off the road. In the opinion of the knacker man, the pony had died of colic, but there was no other evidence to support this.

There are ponies in the Haytor area that are in need of sorting because the owner is deceased, yet his ponies are still grazing the moor & breeding, resulting in unmarked stock being on the increase. This situation requires attention.

Note provided by Karla McKechnie, Dartmoor Livestock Protection Officer.

13 March 2019.