

Dartmoor Commoners' Council Member - Job Description

Dartmoor Commoners' Council (Council) is comprised of 28 members of whom 20¹ are appointed from within the commoning community by election.

All Members of Council that are appointed by the commoners must be a commoner and be recorded in the Council's register of common rights and to have paid their contributions in each financial year that their name has been recorded. There should be only one member of any local commoners' association on Council at any one time².

The following job description is intended to help Members of Council and commoners intending to stand for Council to better understand the role of Council Members. This job description is relevant to those Members of Council elected to Council by commoners; the 16 Quarter men and 4 small graziers and to the eight Members that are co-opted or represent specific interests including those of the common land owners.

Council consists of Members who in turn are subject to those duties and functions stipulated by the enabling legislation (Dartmoor Commons Act 1985). Those duties and functions include:

- Ensuring the maintenance of the proper standards of livestock husbandry on the common land;
- Protecting the commons and rendering assistance to any commoner in the maintenance of his rights of common;
- Having regard to conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the commons and their use as a place of recreation for enjoyment by the public³.

Job description

1. All Members of Council are expected to undertake their functions in accordance with the duties and functions described above.
2. All Members of Council that are elected by commoners are expected to represent and to provide a point of contact with the commoners in the quarter from which they were elected. This includes regular contact with the appropriate local commoner's associations.
3. All Members are expected to attend and participate in the formal Meetings of Council of which there are usually six per year and if unable to attend to submit their apologies in advance of the meeting. Any Member who fails to attend three consecutive Meetings, without providing apologies and an adequate explanation, will cease to be a Member of Council.
4. At the request of the Chairman individual members may be asked to participate in working groups established to address specific issues or local disputes. Additionally, when a Council Member represents Council at other meetings, they are to provide a short note to be used as a record of their attendance at the meeting & to advise other Council Members of the outcome of that meeting. This will only apply if a formal note or minute is not being produced imminently.
5. Members may from time to time be requested to undertake Council business in quarters other than their own. This might include the counting of livestock and providing independent facilitation to an issue that they have no direct interest in.

6. Members may be asked to provide information to enable Council to carry out its duties.
7. All Members are expected to adhere to the code of conduct as set out in the Council's Standing Orders.
8. All Council Members are expected to declare and update a list of their affiliations and participation in other groups or organisations that might be relevant to fulfilling their functions as a Member of Council. The opportunity is provided by the annual update of Members' declaration of interests.

Notes

1. The 20 elected commoners comprise 16 commoners who qualify in accordance with paragraph 12(1) of Schedule 1 (Quarter men) and 4 commoners who qualify under section 3 (2) (f) (small graziers) of the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985.
2. Schedule 1 of the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985 section 9 to 13.
3. Part III, section 4 (1) of the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985.

Note provided by John Waldon, chairman, April 2017