

Ugborough Parish Meeting Report from DNPA Ranger Ella Briens March 2023

There are proposed changes within the Authority responding to the financial challenge of reduced core income and rising costs therefore we have undertaken a business review that has been accepted resulting in restructuring and redundancies. You may have seen that the proposals include shutting down the Princetown VC (although we are now able to keep it running using some last-minute additional funds but this will only be temporary). We are however seeking to diversify and grow our income streams like the planned establishment of a charity that will be able to bid for funds that we (as a public body) are not eligible for to run projects on the moor.

Changes within the Ranger team – Assistant Ranger Ethan Parsons who has been working with us over 2021 and 2022 is thrilled as his position is to be made permanent. Ranger Paul Glanville retired and continues to help us as a volunteer warden, and Ranger Ian Brooker has also retired. These sector Ranger posts are not being replaced so this means that Rangers will have to be spread more thinly across the moor. I will be taking on a new position within the team as Deputy Head Ranger from April – this post was created to help Simon Lee in his role as Ranger Team Manager, becoming Head Ranger. I will still retain a sector on the ground and this will include Ugborough. So, covering the Ugborough parish are Ella and Ethan, and our Head Ranger is Simon Lee slee@dartmoor.gov.uk. You will also see Andrea Roberts as she works in the neighbouring parishes and Stuart Hoopel who runs the nearby Horns and Dendles volunteer work parties in Cornwood.

Volunteer Wardens – thank you to our local VW's who help us out and continue to support Rangers with patrolling, Youth Rangers, local events like ditch-digging (such as the ones we ran on nearby Stowford Lane with Ivybridge Community College), litter-picking at Cantrell Moorgate and Stowford Quarry, fire-pit restoration, surveying rights of way and mapping swales and wildfires – Jo Burgess, Marcus Bailey, Tim Ferry, Gordon Flower, Nigel Philips, Ian Johnson and Tim Brook have all been working around the Ugborough area this year.

Public Rights of Way remain an important area of our work and as a reminder DNPA are responsible under a delegated agreement with DCC for roadside signage and the paths surface. Technically field furnishings (stiles and gates), fallen trees and overgrowing vegetation are the responsibility of the landowner - but we do what we can to help. **See CamsWeb** – <https://prow.dartmoor.gov.uk> – where you can report a problem and track issues on Public Rights of way. Do let us know of any fingerposts (especially roadside) that require replacement by contacting Ella directly. This year we are using a new ArcSpeed phone App to survey routes and photograph all infrastructure. Anyone wondering about the new posts above Stowford Lane on the

track junction - they work as a counter to collect data on the use of the bridleway and Puffing Billy track installed by John Howell, James Wrights and Ethan Parsons.

We have been pleased to work with local councillors Laurie and Clive regarding the upgrade of the footpath surface throughout the park in Bittaford, drainage improvements and also planned new gates and picnic bench together with DNPA officer Tim Russell. Although this work is very protracted (and therefore frustrating at times!), we will get there in the end and DNPA would very much like to thank the council for the contribution to works 😊. We are also planning to do some small improvements up at nearby Cantrell Moor Gate regarding upgrading the surface of where people park with Access officer James Wright – we have already been up there and undertaken a small tidy up of vegetation and litter-pick.

Patrolling and CSAS – Very busy visitor periods for the Ranger Service often equal a rise in issues like littering, camping in the wrong places, vehicle parking that blocks gates and highways, erosion and damage (especially from firepits) and dogs chasing livestock. We have sadly seen an increase in abuse and challenges, and we have been utilising bodycams as part of our tool kit together with the numerous yellow signs (which have currently been taken down for the Winter). Nevertheless, most people are respectful of the moors and recognise how lucky we are to have them on our doorstep!

Youth Rangers – following the success of the Ranger Ralph club (5-12year olds), we then started Junior Rangers (12-16year olds) and are now still also running a Youth Ranger Programme (16 years plus) which could lead onto a DNPA apprenticeship!

Engagement Ranger Emily Cannon has been working locally with the Youth Ranger team so if you know any interested young Rangers do get them to contact the new Youth Ranger Officer Andy Bailey (who will be taking over from Emily in April) on abailey@dartmoor.gov.uk. Local YR projects have included working on the nearby historic Addicombe settlements – bracken bashing the sites, and also Natural Flood Management building of wooden dams constructed below Hangershell. We have also been working with Ivybridge Community College as mentioned above with successful litter-picks, ditch digs and track maintenance.

Update from **Tamsin Thomas over the last three months for Our Common Cause Project** (working on Ugborough and Harford Moor)– see separate report attached...

I have also started to look at local areas with regards to **Natural Flood Management** – we had a successful pilot project creating different micro-dams out of stone, willow and oak, run by officer Kerry Smith and I helped her with works on Lambsdown, Buckfastleigh West. This work will now also include the Erme and the Yealm catchments - so do get in contact if you would like more information. You can email officers Kerry or Angelique on: ksmith@dartmoor.gov.uk or Angelique McBride on amcbride@dartmoor.gov.uk The Erme and Yealm are also two of our priority catchments for **Nature Recovery** so we are starting to speak to people (land managers / farmers / foresters) about how they would like to be engaged and participate. We will be offering advice, funding and looking to form cluster and

catchment groups. This is not just about nature, we are offering a more integrated approach to delivery so are interested in speaking to landowners and managers about their interests and how we could support collaborative working. Do contact Chris Giles if you would like more information on nature recovery:
cgiles@dartmoor.gov.uk

Our **Peatland Restoration team** (led by David Leach) completed last year the restoration of 22ha of peatland habitat at nearby Left Lake which straddles the boundary of nearby Harford & Ugborough Moors. Blocking old drainage ditches using peat blocks, timber blocks covered with peat and in one very deep ditch, granite. Restoration will raise the water table and conserve the peat by keeping it wet. Over time this will reduce carbon emissions from the degraded peat that has been dried by historic drainage. There are other benefits for biodiversity, water quality, flood mitigation and the historic environment (conserving pollen and other indicators of past environmental condition and land use in the peat). David can be contacted on dleach@dartmoor.gov.uk . I have been amazed how the work has 'blended in' although you will easily see the stone dams in place at Leftlake.

DNPA Byelaw review - The aim here is to simplify and update the byelaws that were originally adopted in 1989 - in consulting we have received over 4000 responses (for each amendment) and the final draft has been considered at a special Authority meeting however this work is now on hold. Due to a separate High Court challenge on people's right to Wild camp, this byelaw will not be currently amended (and remains as it is) until the legal action is concluded – currently under application to appeal but landowners have agreed and given permission regarding areas where people can partake in no-trace camping (there is an on-line map of the area with permission).

FIPL – Farming In Protected Landscapes - has everyone heard about the grant scheme open to agricultural landowners? Rangers have been promoting the scheme and encouraging landowners to make applications. Do look at our webpages for details. Grants are still available...

For information, a link to the **Dartmoor Hill Farm Project** latest newsletter can be found here: [LATEST NEWS | Dartmoor Hill Farm Project](#)

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