

## DETAILED PROJECT PLAN

HLF Programme Area			
Area	Programme Title	Main Area (tick <b>one</b> box only)	Links to Other Areas
A	<b>Conserving or restoring the built and natural features</b> that create the historic landscape character.	✓	
B	<b>Increasing community participation</b> in local heritage		
C	<b>Increasing access</b> to and <b>learning</b> about the landscape and its heritage		✓
D	<b>Increasing training</b> opportunities in local heritage <b>skills</b>		
E	Scheme staffing, overheads and running costs		

PA7

# Ponies, Pounds and Driftways



Heading	Content
Summary	A project to identify and implement repairs to a number of pounds and driftways.
Project description	<p>The Dartmoor pony reflects a vital part of the human story of Dartmoor. They were initially used to transport goods and latterly, with their selective grazing of moorland, they play a vital role in maintaining a variety of habitats and supporting wildlife.</p> <p>Although herds of ponies roam freely on the moor they all belong to different pony keepers.</p> <p>However the economics of keeping ponies means that there is a real concern that we will lose the Dartmoor pony on the moor and the skills and knowledge that pony keepers have, particularly those required to manage the annual pony drift; when ponies are brought off the moor for checking and branding.</p> <p><b>Working with Pony Keepers</b></p> <p>This project will support the Pony Action Group and work with pony keepers to develop local solutions to this problem which may involve management of the mares and/or the stallions.</p>

### **Restoring Driftways and Pounds**

It will also seek to halt a decline in the physical fabric of some of the driftways and pounds that, traditionally, have been vital to management of the pony. These features are part of the cultural heritage of Dartmoor and important in the landscape. Drift ways are used also by many visitors to Dartmoor who use them to access the high moor.

There are five different sites identified within this project, they are at:

#### **Bel Tor driftway at SX 696 728**

The work here is to maintain the surface of the main area that the ponies are drifted into annually. The area is common land owned by Spitchwick manor and subject to commoners grazing animals and recreational use by the public from the 1985 Dartmoor Commons Act. The actual drift lane is the only way through for both animals and the public to link moorland at Mel Tor and Bel Tor corner. Due to a mixture of increasing use and heavy rainfall the surface has eroded and there is risk to both animals and people. The actual route locally is called Dr Blackalls drive (built by a previous Lord of the Manor of Spitchwick) and the plan is to repair the eroded surface by providing better drainage channels and grading in local stone.

#### **Poundsgate pound at SX 705 725**

This is a small enclosure that was used for collecting and storing animals. This is the `pound` in the village name of Poundsgate and the land is owned by Spitchwick manor. However because it is alongside a busy road it is no longer used for its original purposes. Over recent years the area has become overgrown with vegetation. Trees roots from outside the pound (owned by nearby Lake Farm) are causing damage to the stone walls and some have fallen off. The plan is to tidy up the site and put a small notice board on the gate to inform the public of this historical feature and its repair.

#### **East Shallowford pound at SX 695 766**

This privately owned by East Shallowford Farm and the plan here is to tidy up the surface, lay hedges and rebuild stone walls. Initial indications show that the owners are happy to have site interpretation (a small notice board) and via a new small gate visitors could enter the enclosure.

#### **Venton driftway starting at SX 723 762**

This has become completely overgrown and the old cart track is presently impassable. This area is common land which is utilised by commoners for grazing animals and the public for access under the 1985 Dartmoor Commons Act. The common is owned by the occupants of the nearby Blackslade Manor and was until recently within an ESA agreement. There is no new HLS agreement and the whole area of common is becoming impenetrable to grazing animals and recreational users. The proposal is, (in conjunction with a neighbouring landowner) to clear vegetation, relocate and repair the old cart track for recreational and commoners use. The nearby landowners (using their own funds) plan to lay their hedges at the same time which will help tidy the whole area up. An information board is to be erected on the main access gate.

	<p><b>Postbridge driftway starting at SX 646 788.</b>  This area is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and next to the lane is a Dartmoor National Park visitor centre and large car park. The lane has become slightly overgrown and also requires some surface repairs to enable better multi-purpose use which includes the movement of grazing animals. The lane is a very popular access route in to the north moor and is also used by the local farmer for moving stock. The plan is to clear vegetation, widen and resurface the present route along with reinstating a small clapper bridge and the potential for a small information board.</p>
<p><b>Beneficiaries and communication</b></p>	<p><b>Beneficiaries</b>  Pony keepers will benefit from working together to find solutions to pony management on the moor. They will benefit from better maintained pounds and driftways.  The Dartmoor pony type is presently under threat and these projects show and continuing awareness and support to ponies.  The landscape of Dartmoor will benefit because ponies play an important part in the grazing management of the moor.  Visitors to the moor will benefit because the “Dartmoor landscape” will be maintained.</p> <p><b>Key Messages</b>  Ponies are an important part of Dartmoor’s heritage, helping to create the landscape of the moor.  The driftways and pounds are part of the landscape and need maintaining to help in pony management</p> <p><b>Communications</b>  The project will be communicated to the public via the MTMTE website, parish link magazines, press and media as good news stories.</p>
<p><b>Project buy-in</b></p>	<p>This project has been developed by the Pony Action Group to help address the problems pony keepers have identified. This has gained the support of landowners, other pony keepers, Dartmoor Commoners Council, Duchy of Cornwall, DNPA. The proposals were discussed at the Community Workshop at Moretonhampstead in September and were widely endorsed.</p>
<p><b>Project lead</b></p>	<p>Lead Partner: Dartmoor National Park Authority.  Lead person: Robert Steemson</p> <p>DNPA was chosen as the lead agency due to its role in working with the Pony Action Group and regularly acting as a catalyst for Dartmoor projects. The DNPA Head Ranger will lead the project. He knows all the sites, the owners and commoners involved. He is the DNPA lead on ponies, sits as DNPA staff representative on the Dartmoor Commoners Council and is joint chair of the Pony Action Group.</p>
<p><b>Partners / contractors etc.</b></p>	<p>Pony Action Group-. This group has developed the project alongside the DNPA and will work closely with the National Park. Dartmoor Commoners Council has provided advice and support through the development of the project and will continue in that role.  Works will be carried out by suitably skilled contractors via competitive</p>

	tender.
<b>Project development</b>	<p>This project remains largely unchanged in its aims. We originally aimed to repair four pounds and six drift ways however for the scope has been reduced and now only 5 sites are to be repaired. Other sites were found not to have local support or are no longer of any use. The agreed sites are Poundsgate pound, East Shallowford pound, Venton driftway, Postbridge driftway, Bel tor driftway.</p> <p>Early communications and negotiations have already started on these sites. Some should be easy to undertake others, on common land will be more complex.</p>
<b>Activities and Timetable</b>	<p>The aim is for this work to be done over years two to five being subject to land owner and commoner's approval.</p> <p>Bel tor driftway – start negotiations February 2015 and undertake work during August/September 2015, cost £3,000.</p> <p>Poundsgate pound – start negotiations March 2015 with work being done July 2015, cost £1,500. (Costs include information boards at £500)</p> <p>East Shallowford pound – start negotiations March 2015 with work being done in August 2015, cost £6,500. (Costs include information boards at £500)</p> <p>Venton driftway – start negotiations January 2016 with work being done in August 2016, cost £19,000.</p> <p>Postbridge driftway – negotiations March 2017, work done August 2017, cost £4,000</p>

Activity Timeline	Y1												Y2				Y3				Y4				Y5							
	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
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a. Bel Tor Driftway																																
b. Poundsgate pound																																
c. East Shallowford pound																																
d. Venton mire track																																
e. Postbridge driftway																																

Budgets	Cost Breakdown		
Estimated Total Cost	Cost:		Contingency:
	£ 34,000		£0
VAT	a. Is VAT applicable?	b. Is VAT reclaimable?	c. VAT amount:
	YES	YES	£0
Lead Partner Contributions	Type:	Secured:	Unsecured:
	Cash (source):	£0	£0
	Staff:	£0	£0
	Volunteers:	£0	£0
	In-kind:	£0	£0
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
Other Contributions	Type:	Secured:	Unsecured:
	Cash (source):	£0	£0
	Staff (source):	£0	£0
	Volunteers (source):	£0	£0
	In-kind (source):	£0	£0
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<i>Moor than meets the eye contribution</i>	Contribution:		Intervention Rate (%)
	£ 34,000		100

<b>Outputs</b>	<p>Key deliverables are:</p> <p>Bel tor driftway - a sustainably restored surface enabling safer use of access lane for the collection of drifting ponies and public use.</p> <p>Poundsgate pound – a historic pound that has a restored surface, is free of imposing vegetation, restored walls and an information board on gate to interpret the history of the site</p> <p>East Shallowford pound – a pound that has a restored surface, is free of imposing vegetation, hedges laid, restored walls and potentially an information board on a gate with public access.</p> <p>Venton drift way – a safe and accessible track for commoners and recreational users to utilise. Scrub clearance and stock to leer back in the area along with an information board on access gate.</p> <p>Postbridge drift way – a multi use restored for use by commoners and the public</p>
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<b>Output indicators and targets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five landscape features associated with the traditional management of ponies are restored to enable them to be brought back into use</li> </ul>			
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Heritage will be in a better condition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improvement to the physical fabric of point related features (pounds and driftways)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>People will have learnt about heritage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Visitors and local people have a better understanding of the historical and current significance of these features.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			
<b>Evidence</b>	<p>Photographic evidence will be supplied before, during and upon completion of work. All work done will visibly improve individual sites and raise the awareness of the respective features, their importance in the landscape whilst contributing and supporting the survival and tradition of keeping ponies on Dartmoor.</p>			
<b>Wider context</b>	<p>Links between this project and others LP projects  Postbridge driftway will be part of the wider Postbridge hub project PB1 and will also link in with proposals from Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust to develop a trail around Postbridge and Bellever. It will link with PC1 Discovering the Dartmoor Story and interpretation about pounds and drift ways which will be included in the National Park Visitor Centre at Postbridge PC8. It will also strongly link to PB8 Pony Herd Identification Project</p> <p>There are also potential links to PB2 Parishscapes and PB3 Moor Medieval- the medieval story and transhumance.</p>			
<b>Legacy and maintenance of benefits</b>	<p>It is anticipated that the finished works will last for many years. Respective land owners, working with volunteer groups and commoners associations where appropriate, will take pride in these features and continue with any minor maintenance that might occur.</p>			
<b>Risks and Risk Mitigation</b>	Nature of risk	Severity	Likelihood	Measures undertaken
	<p>The main risk is a land owner (or commoners association where appropriate) not agreeing to support the project.</p>	H	L	<p>These projects have been developed with landowners, community and board members</p>
<b>Background information</b>	<p>In response to the plight of ponies on Dartmoor the DNPA pulled together key partners to set up a Pony Action Group (PAG).</p> <p>Attached are the relevant parts of the current PAG action plan, which has assisted thoroughly in this project emerging.</p>			

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## **The Future for Ponies on Dartmoor**

### **An Action Plan**

**September 2012**

**Context:** This is a joint vision/action plan produced as a partnership initiative to protect the long term future of ponies on Dartmoor. The plan is the outcome of a series of meetings between interested parties who share a concern for the future of ponies grazing on Dartmoor and who recognise their value for heritage, landscape and biodiversity.

**The Partnership:** The following support the initiative - Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA), Natural England (NE), Dartmoor Pony Society (DPS), Dartmoor Hill Pony Association (DHPA), Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust (DPHT), the Duchy and the Dartmoor Commoners Council (DaCC).

### **1 The Future for Ponies on Dartmoor**

That healthy ponies in sustainable numbers continue to graze on Dartmoor to help maintain its cultural heritage, biodiversity and landscape qualities, and for the enjoyment of the general public.

#### **Aims**

- To actively manage a healthy and sustainable stock of ponies on Dartmoor to graze the commons of Dartmoor.
- To maintain and where possible expand markets for ponies and maintain a reasonable price
- To protect the ponies on Dartmoor whilst recognising that commoners choose the pony type relevant to their business need.
- To provide clear information for visitors about the different types of pony grazing on Dartmoor and the contribution that they all make to the management of the landscape, and provide opportunities for visitors to enjoy ponies as part of their overall enjoyment of Dartmoor.



- To ensure that the Dartmoor type pony is not lost on the commons

## 2 Issues and potential actions

### a) To actively manage a healthy and sustainable stock of ponies on Dartmoor to graze the commons of Dartmoor.

#### Issues:

The health and quality of the pony stock on Dartmoor is variable. Most ponies are healthy and of good composition but there are a few exceptions. This can affect the public perception of ponies and their welfare. Although the number of mares is managed there are currently too many foals born annually resulting in large numbers not being sold at market and some animals of poor quality affecting the market price.

#### Actions:

- To continue to use agri-environment schemes to support ponies for conservation grazing and as part of a mixed grazing regime. **Lead: NE**
- Active management of the number of foals born every year: **Lead: All**
- To research the possibility of stallion control and contraception and possibly test ideas in a pilot area. **Lead: DHPA**

### b) To maintain and where possible expand markets for ponies and maintain a reasonable price

#### Issues:

The market for ponies has been difficult and variable over the past few years, some ponies have done well and some farmers have done well but others have struggled. A strong market with realistic prices is the only real long term sustainable solution for the future of ponies on Dartmoor. Positive promotion and PR must remain an ongoing priority with all groups presenting the same message and placing ponies from Dartmoor high in the market place as desirable to own.

#### Actions:

Maintain and expand existing markets for ponies - for riding, horse and trap and for conservation grazing;

- Promotion of Dartmoor markets to potential buyers. **Lead: All**
- PR and continued promotion through Countryside Management Organisations of the potential for conservation grazing. **Lead: All**

#### Maintaining a realistic price for all ponies at market;

- Promote only the sale of higher quality ponies for sale at market. **Lead: DHPA and DPHT**
  - In the longer term to improve the overall health and composition of ponies on Dartmoor whatever their type. This may require managed breeding and ideas should be explored with the Dartmoor Commoners' Council, picking up on good practice implemented in the New Forest and elsewhere across the country. **Lead: All**
  - Identify and develop new markets for ponies: **Lead All**
  - To consider the business case for the development of conservation meat and a new abattoir. **Lead : DHPA**
  - Consider the potential for establishing marketing co-operatives for new and existing markets. **Lead: All**
- c) To protect the Dartmoor type and increase the number of ponies on Dartmoor whilst allowing commoners to choose the pony type relevant to their business need.**

**Issues:**

Farmers should be able to continue to choose the type of ponies they run on their farm, depending on their own preference and the market price. It is recognised that most ponies will do the same job in terms of grazing and therefore all types can contribute positively to land management. Nevertheless, it is important for the cultural heritage of Dartmoor that the native breed Dartmoor type pony is protected.

**Actions:**

DPHT should continue its work to promote and increase the use of the heritage breed on Dartmoor and the DPS to promote pure bred ponies - so that the cultural heritage of ponies grazing on Dartmoor can continue to be celebrated.

- d) To provide clear information for visitors about the different type of pony grazing on Dartmoor and the contribution that they all make to the management of the landscape. To provide opportunities for visitors to see and learn about ponies as part of their overall enjoyment of Dartmoor.**

**Issues:**

Lack of co-ordination between different pony groups has resulted in mixed messages being presented to the public and the press, causing concern about the quality of information supplied. Ponies have a long association with Dartmoor and the public enjoy coming to see them, and they also care very much about their welfare. The public therefore need a clear and consistent message which explains the importance of all types of pony, why they differ and why they are important to Dartmoor both historically and for the future.

**Actions:**

To agree key messages amongst all interested parties and then communicate effectively:

**Lead: DNPA/NE to facilitate**

To develop co-ordinated PR and a communication plan with a strong and single message which promotes ponies on Dartmoor. It is recognised that all groups will liaise with the press

and add new information on occasion but this should not contradict the agreed messages.

**Lead: DNPA/NE to facilitate**

- Reprint of pony leaflet and insert to DV –**DNPA**
- Update all website references - **All**
- PR – promote positive messages locally and nationally - **All**
- Link to the Dartmoor Partnership to ensure the agreed messages are in their new guide. - **DNPA**
- Look for new ways of communicating the pony message via podcasts, blogs, downloadable walks etc - **All**

### **Funding;**

The success of any future funding application to help support ponies will require pony groups speaking with one voice and having a clear strategy towards which they are all working. The most likely source of funding will be through the RDPE and it is important therefore that we get agreement on the action plan and take steps to implement it.