

MOOR THAN MEETS THE EYE LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

25 January 2017, Meeting Room, Parke, 10am

Present:	Ally Kohler	DNPA	AK
	Andy Bradford	Dartmoor Farmers Association	ABr
	Andy Crabb	Historic England	AC
	David Lloyd	DNPA	DL
	Helen Booker	RSPB	HB
	James Platts (Chair)	South West Lakes Trust	JP
	Mark Allott	<i>MTMTE</i> Scheme Manager	MA
	Phil Hutt	Dartmoor Preservation Association	PH
	Simon Lee	Natural England	SL
	Tom Stratton	Duchy of Cornwall	TS
	Tony Clark	CSG Representative	TC
Attending:	Andrew Bailey	Community & Events Officer, <i>MTMTE</i>	ABy
	Beany Townsend	EcoSkills Volunteer	BT
:	Ellie Fabiani-Laymond	Finance & Admin Officer, <i>MTMTE</i>	EL
	Emma Stockley	Community Heritage Officer, <i>MTMTE</i>	ES
	Ian Durrant	DNPA Access & Recreation Officer	ID
	Robyn Owen	EcoSkills Volunteer	RO

1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There was a quick round of introductions.

2 Apologies

Apologies were noted from David Rickwood (Woodland Trust), Ian James (Devon County Council), Jenny How (Visit Dartmoor), Kevin Bishop (DNPA), Peter Harper (CSG) and Chrissy Mason (*MTMTE*).

3 Minutes of the last *MTMTE* LP Board Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2016 were agreed as a true record and have been approved.

ACTION: EL to upload approved minutes to the *MTMTE* website

There is one outstanding action point from the previous meeting:

ACTION: ABy to arrange communications meeting with relevant parties

4 Project Spotlight

The spotlight focused on project PD2 EcoSkills. An informative presentation was given by BT and RO, both current EcoSkills trainees. A summary of the information is as follows:

- There are 5 trainees in the current intake, all from different backgrounds but with a common goal of wanting to gain practical, vocational experience relevant to the conservation workplace
- EcoSkills is a flexible and versatile training programme which can be tailored to the individual needs of each trainee and help them gain 'practical tickets' to add to their academic qualifications
- At the same time, partner organisations benefit from their involvement and work through the various projects within the *MTMTE* area
- Some of their work involves surveying and monitoring with various partner organisations
- They help with ground clearance for the conservation of heritage sites
- They gain knowledge of sensitive land management practices and working with contractors
- They undertake challenging, physical outdoor work in all weathers, learning how to handle power tools confidently
- They learn a lot about ecology and then share this with others through public events and volunteer tasks
- They understand and observe health and safety protocols and procedures
- They engage in blog writing and the use of social media to promote their contributions to the local community and to help promote *MTMTE* and partner organisations

A short question and answer session followed in which the following points were noted:

- Natural England has a similar training scheme in place nationally, which is also HLF funded. The places available on these differ depending on location and are limited at present. However, the HLF were open to the idea of continuing the EcoSkills training in some guise beyond the completion of the Scheme
- EcoSkills is targeted at graduates and is fully funded by the project (PD2), with each trainee allocated a budget for training and travel expenses (£3k each). Natural England also utilise free in-house training opportunities for the trainees, where appropriate
- The re-scoped Dartmoor Diploma project may also provide some relevant training courses in the future

[MA joined the meeting]

5 Highlight Report Review

MA presented the Y3Q1 Highlight Report. The main points are summarised as follows:

Finance

- The Y3Q1 claim was submitted before the Christmas break and payment (expected to be £220k) is due shortly
- The next HLF monitoring meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 7 February
- This is the first time project spend has come in ahead of the quarterly target, mainly due to some large invoices being submitted for work on the Wray Valley Trail
- There is a possibility the Woodland Trust may have some additional extensions to add to their project and this will require an extra £30k budget but no decision can be taken on this until an accurate assessment of the overall scheme finances is known. Some clarification is needed on the purpose of the additional £30k funding – is this required to fulfil an expected overspend on the current project outputs, or will it deliver *additional* outputs?
- Current financial forecasts are not accurate as there are gaps where project leaders have not updated their spend profiles. MA is unable to determine if there will be any project underspends until every project has been properly updated
- Some financial volatility is expected in the future as the next significant spend on the Wray valley Trail (which helps to generate HLF match funding for other projects in the Scheme) is not expected for another 2 years
- Page 3 of the Highlight Report includes details of projects which are behind on their scheduled expenditure

Projects

- Two projects have withdrawn from the Scheme: PB8 (Pony Herd Identification) and PD3 (East Shallowford Trust)
Action MA will attend the next PAG (Pony Action Group) meeting
- PB8 (Pony Herd Identification). An email from JH has been received indicating that Visit Dartmoor will be developing a Dartmoor ponies website independently, with the intention of liaising with all existing Dartmoor pony groups to bring their information together in one place
- By May, project PC8 (Postbridge Visitor Centre) will have a clear steer on the direction they need to be going in. It is important to observe the efficacy of the outputs and outcomes when determining the next steps

CSG

- There were no CSG members present in the meeting at this stage of the proceedings, so MA gave an update
- The most recent CSG (Community Stakeholder Group) meeting was held on 18 January. Currently, there are 10 members with only 4 or 5 having local parish links. There are 5 spaces still available, which continue to be advertised on the website. Ideally, these will be recruited from within the *MTMTE* area
- CSG discussions have included legacy planning and scheme communications. MA invited suggestions from the Board for specific items or issues for the CSG to focus on

- MA also raised a question for the Board which arose at the CSG meeting regarding reporting issues. This subject was deferred for discussion later in the meeting

Community Engagement

- The largest event of Y3Q1 was the annual Lantern Walk (this year themed the River of Life), which was held on 15 October 2016. Over 500 people attended the event and it received excellent feedback from the public
- 2000 volunteer days have been delivered across the Scheme so far which is well ahead of target. Two projects have already exceeded their volunteering goals
- There has been a concerted effort in the last quarter to improve communications and increase social media but more content is needed from project leaders
- If each project provided just one item of news per month (a photo and a strapline would be sufficient), that would generate enough daily news to help raise the profile of the Scheme and keep the social media fresh and up to date
- ABy produces a monthly newsletter and content is needed for this too

Reporting

- The question was raised whether project reporting had improved following the meetings MA scheduled with project leaders over the last two quarters. MA advised that it had not made much difference to the forecasting which still had not been fully updated for all projects. The main issue was understanding how the remaining outputs would be delivered in the final three years of the scheme
- There was a discussion around whether project leaders felt accountable for completing the reports and for delivering the outcomes. It was suggested that partner organisations who have a project in the Scheme should make their project leader(s) more aware of their responsibilities and ensure they understood their commitment to *MTMTE*
- SL suggested a deadline be instated to identify projects which were struggling to make sufficient progress in a timely manner. MA emphasised how critical it was for project leaders to flag up any problems with project delivery as soon as the problem was identified to enable timely intervention/decision making by the Board

Action: MA will draft a letter to all project leaders, for approval by the Chair (JP). The purpose is to:

- 1 remind project leaders of their obligations to *MTMTE***
- 2 ensure quarterly reports are fully completed in a timely and accurate manner**
- 3 ensure project leaders flag up any issues requiring intervention as soon as they are identified**

- It is expected the agreed actions will be in effect for the next quarter end (Y3Q2) which is due at the end of February. This will enable MA to update the scheme financials and allow for greater and more accurate scrutiny of the performance and risks
- PB2 (Parishscapes) is performing well although it appears to an anomaly in terms of project spend against budget. Each parish has a potential £10k to spend in their community. However, ES advised that the community grants are not awarded as lump sums in their entirety but usually released in instalments, depending on the nature of the community projects. Therefore, the current expenditure reflects the grants given out so far but do not reflect the committed funds that have been agreed but not yet paid out
- MA asked that all projects include their 'committed spend' in their quarterly reports and forecasts
- Section 6 of the Highlight Report (page 9) illustrates an estimate for the in-kind contribution of LP Board Members in overseeing the Scheme. MA arrived at an estimated notional cost of £28k which LP Board members generally felt was not high enough to be a true reflection
- JP suggested that LP Board members should capture their own in-kind data and reflect the cost more accurately

[TC joined the meeting]

6 **Scheme and Project Queries**

Updates were given for the following projects:

i. PA1- Moorland Birds

HB updated the Board on the re-scoped Moorland Birds project. The new outputs include a survey of Moorland Birds in the *MTMTE* area and the subsequent analysis of the data. An advisory post will be created to take forward the results of the survey, for use by farmers, partners and the public, to help safeguard the birds and improve habitats. RSPB is in the process of sourcing some additional funding for the project. Once this is in place and signed off, the RSPB will be fully committed, picking up any financial shortfall. The outputs also include interpretation and guided walks. HLF has agreed to the revised plan in principle.

A question was raised over the volunteering aspect of the project. HB explained that the volunteer element of the original project was based around the nest protection of the Red-backed shrike. This element has now been removed and replaced with skilled volunteers participating in the survey and related data analysis. The project will bring all Dartmoor bird species and habitat data together as one unified resource. The benefits will be as follows:

- It will bring together the data from four different bird projects across Dartmoor
- It will help identify species at risk
- There will be more information on a variety of moorland bird species

- It will provide a guide to habitats and hotspots for farmers and landowners
- It will inform interpretation for the public
- The advisory role will provide advice and guidance to the farmers, partner organisations and to the public
- It will deliver a legacy beyond the scope of the scheme. Initially qualitative in nature, it will help to track changes in bird populations in the future

HB asked for Board approval of the re-scoped project. It was APPROVED

Action: HB is to return to the Board when the new advisor has been appointed and report on progress

ii. PB1 – Bellever and Postbridge Trails

ID gave an update on the progress of PB1. He provided an activity timeline to illustrate the various stages of planned work through to completion.

A public consultation was held in Postbridge over three days in December 2016 and the Duchy has written to all their tenants regarding the proposed routes. The interpretative elements of the project will be designed in partnership with the Forestry Commission. ID has also spent some time with MA on forecasting expenditure over the next 2.5 years.

ABr suggested that one of the trails be linked to the Brimpts Tin Trail to provide a longer alternative route for experienced walkers. However, ID advised that this is not possible as land access has affected some of the planned routes. This will also influence some of the interpretation.

TS queried the Powdermills route, citing concerns over the limited parking at one end of the trail. ID indicated that the intention was to route the walk as starting from Postbridge to avoid this issue. ABr suggested linking a route to Dunnabridge, where there is ample parking.

The plan of action presented to the Board should bring the project back on schedule.

iii. PB8 – Pony Herd Identification

This was discussed briefly earlier in the meeting. Please see page 3.

iv. PD1 – Dartmoor Diploma

The original project has now been withdrawn and split into two separate initiatives.

The PD1 Dartmoor Diploma was presented and approved at the previous LP Board meeting. Since then the Prince's Countryside Fund and the Duchy of Cornwall has confirmed funding for this project. The new project will require a

training co-ordinator, to be recruited through the DHFP (Dartmoor Hill Farm Project). The original diploma was dependent upon the generation of £80k course fees but this was not deliverable. Breaking the original project in two, created an opportunity to deliver training in a more practical form.

The second proposal, requiring approval of the Board, is for the second of the two new PD1 projects: Conservation Apprentices. A summary of the project is as follows:

- The project cost is £67,900, £20k of which is funded by the HLF with the remainder being funded by the DNPA
- It will provide two conservation apprentices for two years each who will have the opportunity to work with the DNPA Conservation Works Team, the Dartmoor Rangers, specialists and also other partners
- The funding for PD3 (withdrawn project) has not been utilised yet as it may be required for other uses but if this remains untouched it may be appropriate to use this to fund an additional apprentice – or Moor Skills could deliver a farm apprentice
- Unlike EcoSkills, which is intended for graduates, the apprenticeship roles are targeted at inexperienced school leavers not higher than a level 2 (A-Level equivalent). It does not replicate any of the other training on offer through the scheme

The Conservation Apprentices project was APPROVED

7 Decisions

- a) PA1 Moorland Birds. The project was APPROVED. See page 6.
- b) PB7 (In the footsteps of the Victorians) was re-scoped last year with ES appointed as project leader for a term of 12 months. To extend the contract until the end of the project additional funding of £14k will be required to cover the payroll costs. See page 6 of the Highlight Report. The current contract expires at the end of March 2017 so a decision on this issue will need to be made in the near future. Suggestions were put forward from the Board to help identify where the required additional funding might be found from within the scheme, namely from the other projects that ES supports such as PB2 (Parishscapes), PB3 (Moor Medieval) and PB7 itself.

Action: MA to identify appropriate funding from within the scheme for the extension of PB7 project leader contract

8 Communications

- a) ABy gave a brief events update. A summary of the main points is as follows:
 - There are 51 events scheduled so far for this year. More will emerge as the year progresses
 - 17 events are currently being advertised on the website

- Large events planned are: a Victorian Symposium in March (PB7), A “Woodland Festival of Lectures by the EcoSkills trainees (PD2), and open days at the ‘Vinnimoor Dig’ and also at the ‘Widecombe North Hall Manor Dig’ (PB2/PB3). A Haymeadows Conference has also been planned for July (PA2)
- Smaller scale events will include a ‘Night of the Moths, and a Christmas ‘Panto in the Woods’ (PC1)
- The Christmas Woodland Fairy event in December 2016 was a huge success with positive feedback from those attending
- Links have been made with Sue Viccars at the Dartmoor magazine, who have requested an events schedule

b) ABy gave an update on the press and PR opportunities available at present. They include the following:

- Monthly *MTMTE* newsletter
- *MTMTE* website, currently in the process of being updated
- Ongoing use of social media
- Blogs by the EcoSkills trainees (PD2) and the Granite Elements Parishscapes project (PB2)
- A two page article in the Winter edition of the Dartmoor Magazine. This will be an annual contribution until the close of the scheme
- A media training event has been scheduled for volunteers in February. Spare places will be offered out to project leaders

9 AOB

a) The project spotlight for the next meeting will be on PA6 Higher Uppacott

Action: EL to advise AW prior to the next LP Board meeting

b) MA advised the Board that Active Dartmoor (courtesy of JH) is in the process of gathering articles for their Easter edition. This is an opportunity for project leaders to share their project news with the wider public. Deadline for articles is 17 March 2017.

PC6 Heritage trails will be launched to the public through Active Dartmoor.

c) TC introduced himself to the Board and gave an update on the CSG meeting held on 18 January. He reiterated the need for more CSG members based within the MTMTE area and asked the Board to forward any suggestions on possible candidates to MA.

CSG has recognised two current problems, namely communications and accurate reporting. He asked if the CSG might be of some assistance in these areas. The Chair of the CSG, PH (Peter Harper), would like to ensure that money is being spent in accordance with the project profiles. Although they understand the financial situation is volatile, their aim is to assist with the scheme and work together with the Board to promote and disseminate information about the ongoing delivery of the projects. Their focus will also be on the reach and legacy of the scheme and the storage of records.

There was a brief discussion on how the scheme currently reaches beyond the MTMTE area: the outcomes for PA1 Moorland Birds and PC6 Heritage Trails extend to the whole of the Moor. PD1 training will be available to applicants from outside the MTMTE area. Events draw attendance from a wide area, far beyond the boundaries of Dartmoor.

JP updated TC on the discussion about scheme finances.

ABy will produce a communications plan for the CSG (see CSG minutes, page 3).

Action: EL to circulate CSG minutes to LP Board

10 Date of next meeting

26 April 2017, Meeting Room, Parke at 10am.

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 12.34pm.